

[20] They were well into the lofty inquiry on which Galaxidorus and Phidolaus had touched, asking what the nature and force of Socrates' *daimonion* might be. What Simmias said in reply to Galaxidorus we did not hear; but we did hear him say that he had himself asked Socrates about this without ever obtaining an answer. He had also (he said) often witnessed Socrates dismissing as impostors people who claimed to have contact with divine beings by visions, while listening carefully, and eagerly questioning anyone who claimed to have heard a voice. 'We therefore began to suspect privately', he continued, 'that Socrates' *daimonion* was not a vision but a perception of a voice.

Sound is a sort of blow to the mind, which thus receives words forcibly through the ear whenever we talk to one another; but the mind of a higher being guides the gifted soul by a mere thought, for it needs no blow. Such a soul yields to the guide that slackens or intensifies its impulses, for these are not made violent by emotional resistance, but prove soft and pliant, like reins with some give in them. This need cause us no surprise.

Study this discussion of the mind for the conception of consciousness it entails; how does it consider emotions?

The human soul, with all its countless puppet-strings of impulse, is by far the most sensitive machine of all. Handled according to reason, it quickly

responds to any inclination and moves in whatever direction the mind conceives. In man, the strings of emotion and impulse terminate in the thinking mind. If this is disturbed, the strings are pulled, and in turn draw and pull upon the man. We see here the force of thought. Insensate bones and sinews and moist flesh, and the whole mass that these make up, lie heavy and inert. Yet the moment the soul conceives an idea in the mind and excites its impulses in the direction of that idea, the whole mass rises up, taut and tense in every part, and flies into action as though it had wings. And if it is difficult, or impossible, to comprehend the mechanisms of motion, tension, and excitation that thus enable the soul by merely thinking to draw the mass after it by its impulses, although the mere entertaining of an idea moves the body so effortlessly, then we need not be unbelievers either in regard to the notion that a mind may be guided by a superior mind, and a soul by a more divine soul that contacts it from without by whatever kind of contact thought may have with thought,