

of Cyzicus would do it for them, he said; but they were not to think that this was what the god really wanted. His command to all the Greeks was rather that they should give up war and evil, consort with the Muses, calm their passions by reason and study, and live a harmless and useful life together.'

[8] While Simmias was speaking, my father, Polymnis, had come in and taken a seat beside him. 'Epaminondas invites you', he said, 'and all these people, to wait here, unless you have something more important on hand. He wishes you to meet our visitor, who is an important personage come on an important and honourable errand from the Pythagoreans in Italy. He has come to pour a libation at the tomb of old Lysis, at the bidding, as he says, of certain dreams and clear visions; he has also brought a large sum in gold, and thinks he ought to repay Epaminondas for his care of the old man. He is most insistent on this, though we neither ask nor want help for our poverty.' Simmias was delighted. 'What a wonderful man!' he said, 'worthy to be called a philosopher; but why does he not come to us at once?'

'He spent the night', replied Polymnis, 'by the tomb of Lysis, and I think Epaminondas took him to the Ismenus to wash. Then they will join us. Before he met us, he had slept by the tomb, intending to take the remains back to Italy, unless he received any daemonic warning during the night.'

[9] When my father had finished, Galaxidorus burst out. 'Heracles!' he exclaimed, 'how hard it is to find anyone free of pretence and superstition! Some are merely the involuntary victims of these failings, through ignorance or weakness; but there are others who ascribe their actions to divine power in order to appear special favourites of the gods, hiding their rational ideas under a cover of dreams or visions or some such pretentious foolishness. That may be a useful trick for politicians, who are forced to deal with obstinate and disorderly people. Superstition will serve as a bridle to rein back the impulses of the masses and divert them into useful outlets. But this kind of decoration is not only indecorous for philosophy, it is quite contrary to her professed aims, if, while claiming to teach the good and the expedient by reason, she acts as though she despised reason, and takes refuge in the gods as principles of action, and scorns her own powers of demonstration only to have recourse to prophecies

and visions, in which the poorest intellect is often no less successful than the finest! This is why your friend Socrates, my dear Simmias, seems to me to have adopted a more philosophical style of education and reasoning, by choosing simple sincerity as the mark of the liberal lover of truth, and blowing away pretentiousness—which is nothing but a smokescreen of philosophy—on to the sophists.'

Various names for a  
genio, personal deity,  
daimon, or daemon

[10] 'Well, then,' said Theocritus, 'what do we say about Socrates' *daimonion*, my friend? Imposture, or what? Nothing of what is told of Pythagoras' power of prophecy strikes me as so impressive or so divine. God seems to have given Socrates right from the start a vision to guide his steps in life,

Socrates—you must remember this, Simmias—was walking up to the Crossroads and Andocides' house, asking questions all the time, and confusing Euthyphro in his playful way. Then, quite suddenly, he stopped and was silent for some time, concentrating on his own thoughts. He then did an about-turn, and went down Boxmakers Street, calling back those of his companions who had gone ahead by saying that the *daimonion* had occurred. Most of us, including myself (I was keeping close to Euthyphro) turned round with him, but some young fellows carried straight on, with a view to discrediting the *daimonion*. They dragged with them the piper