

Greek philosophers' belief in the Resurrection

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Ancient Greek poet. Homers writes about the shelters of souls. He believed that the souls which manifest themselves here in bodies have shelters in another place. Pythagoras a Greek mathematician believed in the Resurrection and argued that purified souls would join the exalted dwellers of higher worlds while evil ones would remain imprisoned on the earth which would be enveloped by flames of fire. Plato attributes to Socrates many arguments for the Resurrection and eternal life some of which are as follows:

Man should be virtuous. To become virtuous requires resistance against carnal desires. This means a deprivation on the part of man. This deprivation will be compensated with an eternal happy life.

Opposites follow each other in the world. Light and darkness spring and winter day and night follow each other. Death follows life; so another life will follow death. However this second life will be eternal.

Everyone sometimes feels as if he experienced something before which is just happening to him now. This means that we lived this life in another world the world of the spirits before we come here. So this life is the result of a previous life and a 'rehearsal' of another life which is to come.

Although it is highly questionable whether this last argument is correct and although it suggests incarnation it is an undeniable fact that Socrates and his student Plato believed in an afterlife.

Aristotle diluted the idealism of his teacher. Plato with some elements of materialistic philosophy. However he too believed in the existence of the spirit and its immortality. He said: 'Apart from man's material body something immaterial exists in him which is immortal.'

Xenophanes and Heraclitus are among the ancient Greek philosophers who believed in an afterlife. The former held that apart from his body man had a soul and that soul would continue to live after man's death. Among the principles of good morality he argued was: It is not possible for the One Who has created the universe so beautifully and adorned it because of His love for man that He will not bring him back to life again after he has made him die. Heraclitus argued: During the Last Day stars will fall onto the earth and envelop it as a circle of fire. Evil souls will remain in this fire as a punishment while pure ones will escape it and rise to higher abodes.