

Episode 174 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 26

- Chapter 12 - The New Hedonism 03

Post by "Cassius" of May 14, 2023 at 8:16 AM

On page 227 DeWitt writes:

To the youthful Menoeceus Epicurus writes: "Plain-tasting foods bring a pleasure equal to that of luxurious diet when once the pain arising from need has been removed. and bread and water afford the very keenest pleasure when one in need of them brings them to his lips:' 22

This is the fixed ceiling for pleasure. which he endeavors to establish in opposition to Plato. who compared the appetitive part of the soul to "a many-headed beast" and held to the opinion that desires increase endlessly and that pleasure defied the fixing of a limit. 23

The footnotes under 23 are from Plato's Republic:

[Plato, Republic, Book 9, section 585e](#)

[585d] that the kinds concerned with the service of the body partake less of truth and reality than those that serve the soul?" "Much less." "And do you not think that the same holds of the body itself in comparison with the soul?" "I do." "Then is not that which is fulfilled of what more truly is, and which itself more truly is, more truly filled and satisfied than that which being itself less real is filled with more unreal things?" "Of course." "If, then, to be filled with what befits nature is pleasure, then that which is more really filled with real things [585e] would more really and truly cause us to enjoy a true pleasure, while that which partakes of the less truly existent would be less truly and surely filled and would partake of a less trustworthy and less true pleasure." "Most inevitably," he said. "Then those who have no experience [586a] of wisdom and virtue but are ever devoted to¹ feasting and that sort of thing are swept downward, it seems, and back again to the center, and so sway and roam² to and fro throughout their lives, but they have never transcended all this and turned their eyes to the true upper region nor been wafted there, nor ever been really filled with real things, nor ever tasted stable and pure pleasure, but with eyes ever bent upon the earth⁴ and heads bowed down over their tables they feast like cattle, [586b] grazing and copulating, ever greedy for more of these delights; and in their greed¹ kicking and butting one another with horns and hooves of iron they slay one another in sateless avidity, because they are vainly striving to satisfy with things that are not real the unreal and incontinent part of their souls." "You describe in quite oracular style,³ Socrates," said Glaucon, "the life of the multitude." "And are

not the pleasures with which they dwell inevitably commingled with pains, phantoms of true pleasure, illusions of scene-painting, so colored by contrary juxtaposition [586c] as to seem intense in either kind, and to beget mad loves of themselves in senseless souls, and to be fought for,¹ as Stesichorus says the wraith of Helen was fought for at Troy through ignorance of the truth?" "It is quite inevitable," he said, "that it should be so."

AND

[Plato, Republic, Book 8, section 562a](#)

[562a] "Shall we definitely assert, then, that such a man is to be ranged with democracy and would properly be designated as democratic?" "Let that be his place," he said. "And now," said I, "the fairest¹ polity and the fairest man remain for us to describe, the tyranny and the tyrant." "Certainly," he said. "Come then, tell me, dear friend, how tyranny arises.² That it is an outgrowth of democracy is fairly plain." "Yes, plain." "Is it, then, in a sense, in the same way in which democracy arises out of oligarchy that tyranny arises from democracy?" [562b] "How is that?" "The good that they proposed to themselves¹ and that was the cause of the establishment of oligarchy—it was wealth,² was it not?" "Yes." "Well, then, the insatiate lust for wealth and the neglect of everything else for the sake of money-making was the cause of its undoing." "True," he said. "And is not the avidity of democracy for that which is its definition and criterion of good the thing which dissolves it³ too?" "What do you say its criterion to be?" "Liberty,⁴" I replied; "for you may hear it said that this is best managed in a democratic city, [562c] and for this reason that is the only city in which a man of free spirit will care to live.¹" "Why, yes," he replied, "you hear that saying everywhere." "Then, as I was about to observe,² is it not the excess and greed of this and the neglect of all other things that revolutionizes this constitution too and prepares the way for the necessity of a dictatorship?"