

Plato's Philebus and the Limit of Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of May 27, 2022 at 7:00 AM

I woke up this morning thinking about this passage from Lucretius Book One which provides an example of why the philosophical perspective is so important. Without a sound understanding of philosophy you can't withstand the constant assault from false religion and false worldviews:

Quote

102] But still I fear your caution will dispute the maxims I lay down, who all your life have trembled at the poets' frightful tales. Alas! I could even now invent such dreams as would pervert the steadiest rules of reason, and make your fortunes tremble to the bottom. No wonder! But if Men were once convinced that death was the sure end of all their pains, they might with reason, then, resist the force of all Religion, and contemn the threats of poets. Now, we have no sense, no power, to strive against prejudice, because we fear a scene of endless torments after death.

In that selection you could insert in place of the underlined part these observations from the first five PDs and then understand them as providing us "the reasoning/power to strive against prejudice" and thus refute the major religious/philosophical positions that are the enemies of Epicureanism:

- 1 - "that perfect gods would not care to interfere in our affairs and thus we need not be concerned about them" (PD1)
- 2 - "that anything we cannot sense is irrelevant to us and thus the state of being dead can cause us no harm or good" (PD2)
- 3- "that Pleasure can be complete when it fills out experience, and thus we don't always need more" (PD3)
- 4- "that pain is never so potent that it can blot out all pleasure for the rest of our lives, so pleasure can be continuous and is always available as a guide to action" (PD4)
- 5- "that a life of true virtue IS a life of pleasure, and thus virtue is not its own reward." (PD5)