

Episode 234 - Cicero's OTNOTG - 09 - Dealing With Marcus Aurelius And The Canonical Basis For the Epicurean View Of Divinity

Post by "Cassius" of June 21, 2024 at 8:28 AM

The long discussion of images begins in section 26 of Book 4. I would say that Epicurus seems to be making a distinction about our ability to perceive the retained "shapes" of the groups of atoms that stream off the surface of things, and that this retained shape would not necessarily be the same as seeing, hearing tasting etc. For example the reference below to perceiving them in sleep are presumably not involving the eyes because our eyes are closed when asleep?

But the references do seem to be dealt with as a group so it's going to be difficult to pull it apart. Some of this might apply to mirages and some might not, and then there's the separate discussion (somewhere else) about how images are involved before we walk or take other actions.

[26] But since I have taught of what manner are the beginnings of all things, and how, differing in their diverse forms, of their own accord they fly on, spurred by everlasting motion; and in what way each several thing can be created from them; and since I have taught what was the nature of the mind, and whereof composed it grew in due order with the body, and in what way rent asunder it passed back into its first-beginnings: now I will begin to tell you what exceeding nearly concerns this theme, that there are what we call idols of things; which, like films stripped from the outermost body of things, fly forward and backward through the air; and they too when they meet us in waking hours affright our minds, yea, and in sleep too, when we often gaze on wondrous shapes, and the idols of those who have lost the light of day, which in awful wise have often roused us, as we lay languid, from our sleep; lest by chance we should think that souls escape from Acheron, or that shades fly abroad among the living, or that something of us can be left after death, when body alike and the nature of mind have perished and parted asunder into their several first-beginnings. I say then that likenesses of things and their shapes are given off by things from the outermost body of things, which may be called, as it were, films or even rind, because the image bears an appearance and form like to that, whatever it be, from whose body it appears to be shed, ere it wanders abroad. That we may learn from this, however dull be our wits.