

Episode 252 - Why Reverence The Epicurean Gods?

Post by "Joshua" of October 26, 2024 at 6:56 PM

Quote

What are those good things? Sensual pleasures, no doubt; for you know no delight of the mind but what arises from the body, and returns to it.

We should spend some more time on this from last week. Cicero loves to exploit Epicurus' position on the physicality of the soul in such a way as to muddle the distinction between mental and bodily pleasure.

Yes, Epicurus held that the soul is made of matter. Yes, the soul is rooted in the body and cannot survive without it. But to imply, therefore, that the distinction between mind and body is without meaning is to commit a serious injustice to the ancient Epicureans; mental pleasures and pains are quite different to bodily pleasures and pains, and Cicero is helping no one when he ignores those differences--unless it be that Cicero helps himself, and others who think like him, to view Epicurus as something less than human.