

Episode 257 - There Is No Necessity To Live Under Necessity - Part 1

Post by “Don” of November 25, 2024 at 11:12 AM

3.2 Menoeceus 133-135: [133] Seeing that, whom do you consider is better or more powerful than one who holds pious beliefs concerning the gods; one who has absolutely no fears concerning death; one who has rationally determined the τέλος of one's natural state; and the one who grasps that, on the one hand, good things (namely pleasures) are both easily attained and easily secured, and, on the other hand, evil things (or pains) are either short in time or brief in suffering; someone who *laughs at Fate* which is introduced onto the stage of life by many as the mistress of all things? For that person, even though some things happen by necessity, some by chance, and some by our own power, for although necessity is beyond our control, they see that chance is unstable and there is no other master beyond themselves, so that praise and its opposite are inseparably connected to themselves. 134] Because of this, it is better to follow the stories of the gods than to be enslaved by the deterministic decrees of the old natural philosophers, because necessity is not moved by prayer; and such a one accepts that Fortune is not a god, as the hoi polloi understand (for a god does nothing in a disorderly or haphazardly manner); And it is not the uncertain cause of everything, for one cannot think it can grant good or evil for a person's blessed life; however, it does furnish for oneself the starting point of great goods and great evils, [135] believing that it is better to be unfortunate rationally than fortunate irrationally because it is better to have been deciding the noble way in accomplishing one's actions and to have been foiled than having decided the bad way and to succeed by means of chance.

(My translation but feel free to use the one you like for 133-135)