

Episode 277 - TD07 - Platonism Says This World Is Darkness But The Next World Is Light - Epicurus Disagrees!

Post by “Cassius” of April 15, 2025 at 12:09 PM

In the next several sections Cicero continues his general argument that the soul is divine, but by now the argument is familiar and he does not introduce a lot that is new.

One thing that Cicero does introduce however, and that we'll want to discuss, is that Cicero says god forbids us from taking our life into our own hands and ending it early:

Quote

But these reflections are of long standing, and borrowed from the Greeks. But Cato left this world in such a manner, as if he were delighted that he had found an opportunity of dying; for that God who presides in us, forbids our departure hence without his leave. But when God himself has given us a just cause, as formerly he did to Socrates, and lately to Cato, and often to many others,—in such a case, certainly every man of sense would gladly exchange this darkness, for that light: not that he would forcibly break from the chains that held him, for that would be against the law; but like a man released from prison by a magistrate, or some lawful authority, so he too would walk away, being released and discharged by God. For the whole life of a philosopher is, as the same philosopher says, a meditation on death.

But Cicero also notes that Socrates left voluntarily:

Quote

and it was because he was influenced by these and similar reasons that Socrates neither looked out for anybody to plead for him when he was accused, nor begged any favour from his judges, but maintained a manly freedom, which was the effect not of pride, but of the true greatness of his soul: and on the last day of his life, he held a long discourse on this subject; and a few days before, when he might have been easily freed from his confinement, he refused to be so, and when he had almost actually hold of that deadly cup, he spoke with the air of a man not forced to die, but ascending into heaven.