

The "Daily" Lucretian

Post by "Cassius" of October 15, 2019 at 8:43 AM

DAILY LUCRETIAN TUESDAY OCTOBER 15, 2019

Besides, you see the Mind suffers with the body, and bears a share with it and all it endures; if the violent force of a dart pierces the body, and shatters the bones and nerves, though death does not instantly follow, yet a faintness succeeds, and a sort of pleasing desire of sinking into the ground, a passionate resolution to die, and then again the will fluctuates and wishes to live: the Mind therefore must needs be of a corporeal nature, because It suffers pain by the stroke of darts, which we know are bodies.

I shall now go on to explain clearly of what sort of body this mind consists, and of what principles it is formed. And first I say that the mind is composed of very subtle and minute seeds; that it is so, attend closely, and you will find that nothing is accomplished with so much speed as what the mind attempts, and proposes to execute. The Mind therefore is swifter in its motion than anything in nature we can see or conceive. But that which is so exceedingly quick to move must consist of the roundest and most minute seeds, that may be set a-going by the lightest impulse. So water is moved and disposed to flow by ever so little force, because it is composed of small and slippery seeds; but the nature of Honey is more tenacious, its moisture is more unactive, and its motion slower; its principles stick closer among themselves; and for this reason, because it consists of seeds not so smooth, so subtle, and so round. And thus a large heap of poppy seeds is blown away by the gentlest breath of wind, and scattered abroad; but no blast can shake a heap of stones or darts. Therefore the smoother and smaller the principles of bodies are, the more easily they are disposed to motion, and the heavier and rougher the seeds are, the more fixed and stable they remain.

Since therefore the nature of the mind is so exceedingly apt to move, it must needs consist of small, smooth, and round seeds; and your knowing this, my sweet youth, will be found of great use, and very seasonable for your future inquiries. This will discover clearly to you its nature, of what tenuous parts it is formed, and how small a space it might be contained, if it could be squeezed together. For when the calm of death has possession of a man, and the mind and soul are retired, you will find nothing taken away from the body as to its bulk; nothing as to its weight. Death leaves everything complete, except the vital sense and the warm breath; the whole soul therefore must needs be formed a very small seed, as it lies diffused through the veins, the bowels, and the nerves; because when it has wholly left every part of the body, the outward shape of the limbs remains entire, and they want not a hair of their weight. And this is the nature of wine, when the flavor of it is gone, and of ointments, when their sweet odors are evaporated into air. And thus it is, when any moisture perspires through the pores of the body, the bulk does not appear less to the eye, upon that account, nor is there anything taken off from the weight; for many and small are the seeds that compose the moisture and the smell in

the contexture of all bodies. And therefore we may well assured that the nature of the mind and soul is formed of exceeding little principles, because when it leaves the body, it detracts nothing from the weight.

Yet we are not to suppose this nature of the mind to be simple and unmixed; for a thin breath mingled with a warm vapor, forsakes the bodies of dying men; and this vapor draws the air along with it, for there can be no heat without air intermixed, and heat being in its nature rare, must needs have some seeds of air united with it. We find then the mind consists of three principles: of vapor, air, and heat; yet all these are not sufficient to produce sense: For we cannot conceive that either of these, or all of them united, can be the cause of sensible motions that may produce reason and thought.