

The "Daily" Lucretian

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This nature therefore of the soul is contained by the whole body; it is the keeper of the body, and the cause of its safety: for they are both united closely together by mutual bonds, nor can they be torn asunder but by the destruction of both. As it is impossible to separate the odor from a lump of Frankincense, but the nature of both must perish, so it is equally difficult to part the mind and soul from the whole body, but they must all be dissolved. Of such interwoven principles are they formed, from their very beginning, that they enjoy a common life, nor have either of them, either the mind or the body in a separate state, the power of sense without the assistance of each other, but sense is incited in us by the nerves, from the common motions of both, and by their joint operations.

Besides, the body is never born alone, nor does it grow or continue after the soul is fled, for the water throws off of vapor when it is made hot, yet it is not by that means destroyed, but remains entire. The limbs I say, cannot with the same safety bear the separation of the soul when it retires from them, but thus divided, they must all perish and rot together. For the mutual conjunction of the soul and body from the very beginning, even as they lie in the womb of the mother, does so jointly promote the vital motions, that no separation can be made without death and dissolution; from hence you learn that, since their preservation so much depends upon each other, their Natures also are inseparably joined and united together.

But further, if anyone denies that the body has sense, and believes that the soul diffused through the whole body is only capable of that motion we call sense, he opposes the plainest evidence, and the truth of all experience; for who would ever pretend to say that the body has sense if the thing itself did not fully prove, and convince us of it? But it is plain, you'll say, that the body is void of all sense when the soul is gone: True, for this faculty is not peculiar to the body alone, but to the soul and body united; and we know the sense becomes weaker, and decays, as the body and soul grow old together.