

# Episode Thirty-Nine - The Mind And Spirit Are Not Supernatural But Parts of A Man Just Like The Head and Foot

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## Welcome to Episode Thirty-Nine of Lucretius Today.

I am your host Cassius, and together with my panelists from the EpicureanFriends.com forum, we'll walk you through the six books of Lucretius' poem, and discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. Be aware that none of us are professional philosophers, and everyone here is a self-taught Epicurean. We encourage you to study Epicurus for yourself, and we suggest the best place to start is the book, "Epicurus and His Philosophy" by Canadian professor Norman DeWitt.

Before we start, here are three ground rules.

First: Our aim is to bring you an accurate presentation of [classical Epicurean philosophy](#) as the ancient Epicureans understood it, which may or may not agree with what you here about Epicurus at other places today.

Second: We aren't talking about Lucretius with the goal of promoting any modern political perspective. Epicurus must be understood on his own, and not in terms of competitive schools which may seem similar to Epicurus, but are fundamentally different and incompatible, such as Stoicism, Humanism, Buddhism, Taoism, Atheism, and Marxism.

Third: The essential base of Epicurean philosophy is a fundamental view of the nature of the universe. When you read the words of Lucretius you will find that Epicurus did not teach the pursuit of virtue or of luxury or of simple living. or science, as ends in themselves, but rather the pursuit of pleasure. From this perspective it is **feeling** which is the guide to life, and not supernatural gods, idealism, or virtue ethics. And as important as anything else, Epicurus taught that there is no life after death, and that any happiness we will ever have must come in THIS life, which is why it is so important not to waste time in confusion.

Now let's join the discussion with today's text:

Latin Text Location 94- 160

Munro Notes:

94-135: well first the mind, animus or mens, is a part of man, as much as the foot or head: some deny this and affirm the mind's sense to be a harmony or certain life-giving state of the body by which we have sense, though the mind is nowhere: they are quite wrong; for often the

body is sick, while the mind is happy; the mind is wretched, when the body is well; just as the foot may be sore, when the head is whole: again the body is often asleep and without sense, while something in us is moved by various passions. Next the soul too or anima is in the body and no mere harmony; for often much of the body is taken away, while life continues; and often when a few particles only of heat and air quit it, life is gone; so that you see that some elements are more important for life than others: this harmony therefore is nothing.

136-160: the animus and the anima make up one nature, but the animus is the ruling part in the whole body and is situated in the region of the heart; the anima being spread through the body: sometimes the animus feels, when the anima does not; but under any violent emotion we see the anima sympathise throughout the frame with the animus: the anima therefore is united with the animus, and, being moved by it, stirs the whole body.

Browne:

First then, I say, the mind of man (which we commonly call the soul) in which is placed the conduct and government of life, is part of man no less than the hand, the foot, the eyes, are parts of the whole animal; though many of the philosophic herd have fancied that the sense of the mind is not fixed to any particular part, but is a sort of vital habit of the whole body, which the Greeks call Harmony; and thence flows all our sense, and the Mind has no particular place for its abode. As when we say health belongs to the body, yet it is no part of the body that is in health, so no particular part, they tell us, is the residence of the mind. But in this they seem to be egregiously wrong, for often when some visible part of the body suffers pain, we feel pleasure in some other part to us unseen; and the contrary often happens in its turn, that a man disturbed in mind is perfectly well all over his body, in the same manner as when a man has the gout in his foot, his head at the same time is free from pain.

Besides, when our limbs are given up to soft sleep, and the wearied body lies stretched at length without sense, there is something within that in the very time is variously affected, and receives into itself all the impressions of joy and empty cares that torment the heart. But to convince you that the soul is a part like other limbs, and not as a harmony, takes up the whole body, observe first that many members of the body may be cut off, yet often life remains in the rest; and again, the same life, when a few certain particles of vital heat fly off, and our last breath is blown through the mouth, immediately leaves possession of our veins and bones. And this will give you to understand that all the particles of matter are not of equal consequence to the body, nor do they equally secure our lives; but the particles of our breath, and the warm vapour, are of principal concern to preserve life to us in all our limbs. This warmth, this vapour, therefore resides in the body, and leaves our limbs as death makes approaches towards us.

But since the nature of the mind and soul is discovered to be a part of the man, give these fiddler's their favorite word, Harmony, again, take from the music of the harp, or whencesoever they borrow the name, and applied it to the soul, which then - forsooth! - had no proper name of its own; however it be, let them take it again, and do you attend what follows.

I say then that the mind and soul are united together, and so joined make up one single nature; but what we call the mind is, as it were, the head, and conducts and governs the whole body, and keeps its fixed residence in the middle region of the heart. Here our passions live, our dread and fear beat here, here are joys make everything serene; here therefore must be the seat of the Mind. The other part, the soul, spread through the whole body, obeys this mind, and is moved by the nod and impulse of it.

Munro:

First then I say that the mind which we often call the understanding, in which dwells the directing and governing principle of life, is no less part of the man than hand and foot and eyes are parts of the whole living creature. [Some however affirm] that the sense of the mind does not dwell in a distinct part, but is a certain vital state of the body, which the Greeks call harmonia, because by it, they say, we live with sense, though the understanding is in no one part; just as when good health is said to belong to the body, though yet it is not any one part of the man in health. In this way they do not assign a distinct part to the sense of the mind; in all which they appear to me to be grievously at fault in more ways than one. Often times the body which is visible to sight, is sick, while yet we have pleasure in another hidden part; and oftentimes the case is the very reverse, the man who is unhappy in mind feeling pleasure in his whole body; just as if, while a sick man's foot is pained, the head meanwhile should, be in no pain at all.

Moreover when the limbs are consigned to soft sleep and the burdened body lies diffused without sense, there is yet a something else in us which during that time is moved in many ways and admits into it all the motions of joy and unreal cares of the heart. Now that you may know that the soul as well is in the limbs and that the body is not wont to have sense by any harmony, this is a main proof: when much of the body has been taken away, still life often stays in the limbs; and yet the same life, when a few bodies of heat have been dispersed abroad, and some air has been forced out through the mouth, abandons at once the veins and quits the bones: by this you may perceive that all bodies have not functions of like importance or alike uphold existence, but rather that those seeds which constitute wind and heat, cause life to stay in the limbs. Therefore vital heat and wind are within the body and abandon our frame at death.

Since then the nature of the mind and that of the soul have been proved to be a part, as it were of the man, surrender the name of harmony, whether brought down to musicians from high Helicon, or whether rather they have themselves taken it from something else and transferred it to that thing which then was in need of a distinctive name; whatever it be, let them keep it: do you take in the rest of my precepts.

Now I assert that the mind and the soul are kept together in close union and make up a single nature, but that the directing principle which we call mind and understanding is the head, so to speak, and reigns paramount in the whole body. It has a fixed seat in the middle region of the breast: here throb fear and apprehension, about these spots dwell soothing joys; therefore here is the understanding or mind. All the rest of the soul disseminated through the whole body

obeys and moves at the will and inclination of the mind.

Bailey:

First I say that the mind, which we often call the understanding, in which is placed the reasoning and guiding power of life, is a part of a man no whit the less than hand and foot and eyes are created parts of the whole living being. [Yet many wise men have thought] that the sensation of the mind is not placed in any part determined, but is a certain vital habit of the body, which the Greeks call a harmony, in that it makes us live with sensation, although in no part does an understanding exist; as when often good health is said to belong to the body, and yet it is not itself any part of a healthy man. In this wise they do not set the sensation of the mind in any part determined; and in this they seem to me to wander very far astray. Thus often the body, which is clear to see, is sick, when, all the same we feel pleasure in some other hidden part; and contrariwise it happens that the reverse often comes to be in turn, when one wretched in mind feels pleasure in all his body; in no other wise than if, when a sick man's foot is painful, all the while, may be, his head is in no pain.

Moreover, when the limbs are given up to soft sleep, and the heavy body lies slack and senseless, yet there is something else in us, which at that very time is stirred in many ways, and admits within itself all the motions of joy and baseless cares of heart. Now that you may be able to learn that the soul too is in the limbs, and that it is not by a harmony that the body is wont to feel, first of all it comes to pass that when a great part of the body is removed yet often the life lingers on in our limbs; and then again, when a few bodies of heat are scattered abroad and some air has been driven out through the mouth, that same life of a sudden abandons the veins and leaves the bones; so that you may be able to know from this that not all kinds of bodies have an equal part to play, nor do all equally support existence, but that rather those, which are the seeds of wind and burning heat, are the cause that life lingers in the limbs. There is then heat and a life-giving wind in the very body, which abandons our dying frame.

Wherefore, since the nature of mind and soul has been revealed as a part of man, give up the name of harmony, which was handed down to musicians from high Helicon: or else they themselves have dragged it forth from some other source, and brought it over to this thing, which then was without a name of its own. Whatever it is, let them keep it: do you listen to the rest of my discourse.

Now I say that mind and soul are held in union one with the other, and form of themselves a single nature, but that the head, as it were, and lord in the whole body is the reason, which we call mind or understanding, and it is firmly seated in the middle region of the breast. For here it is that fear and terror throb, around these parts are soothing joys; here then is the understanding and the mind. The rest of the soul, spread abroad throughout the body, obeys and is moved at the will and inclination of the understanding.