

Episode Forty-One - The Nature of the Mind and Spirit Is Complex; Sense is Not a Property of The Elements That Make Them, But An Event of Their Combination And Motions

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Welcome to Episode Forty-One 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.

Starting with today's Episode, we'll jump right into the discussion, and we'll refer everyone who is not familiar with our podcast back to [Episode One](#) for a discussion of our goals and our ground rules. If you have any question about that, please be sure to contact us at Epicureanfriends.com for more information.

In today's episode, we will cover roughly lines 258 through lines 357 from the Latin text, and we will discuss topics that include how the Nature of the Mind and Spirit Is Complex; that sense is Not a Property of The Elements That Make Them, But Rather an Event of Their Combination And Motions Now let's join the discussion with today's text:

Now let's join today's discussion, with Martin and Charles reading the text:

Latin Text Location 258 - 357

Munro Notes:

258-332: these four substances have their elements so mixed together as to make up a single whole; just as in the flesh of any animal there are different substances, which yet compose a single body : the fourth nameless substance, the first source of sensation, lurks in the inmost recesses of the body and is so to speak the soul's soul, being to the soul what the soul is to the body, and supreme over both. Thus too the three other substances must be so mixed up as to form one whole, lest their several powers acting independently should destroy sensation: every animal has in it the heat, the spirit, and the air, but one animal has more of one than of the other, and thus gets its distinctive character: the lion has more of heat, the stag of spirit or wind, the ox of air: so is it with men; their characters differ as they have more of one or of

another of these: yet reason will so keep down the too great influence of any of them, that a wise man may live like a god.

323-349: the soul is held together by the body and in turn keeps the body in life; the one cannot be torn from the other without destruction to both, any more than its perfume can be separated from frankincense: by their mutual motions sense is kindled; nor is the body ever born nor does it grow without the soul nor continue when the soul has left it; even in the mother's womb they learn in common the motions of life.

350-357: to say that the body has no sense, and that the soul spread through it alone feels, is to contradict a self-evident truth : but it is said when the soul departs, the body has no sense: yes, because sense like much else is no inherent property, but an accident only. [Cassius note: Browne's word for "accident" is "event"]

Browne:

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. And therefore a fourth nature must needs be added to these (and this indeed has no name at all) but nothing can be more apt to move, nothing more subtle than this, nor consist more of small smooth seeds; and this is what first raises a sensible motion through the body: this, as it is formed of the minutest particles, is first put into motion, then the heat, and the unseen vapor receive a motion from it, and then we are and so all the limbs are set a-going; then is the blood agitated, and all the bowels become sensible, and last of all, pleasure or pain is communicated to the bones and marrow. But no pain or any violent evil can pierce so far without disordering and setting the whole into confusion, so that there is no more place for life, and the parts of the soul fly away through the pores of the body. But this motion often stops upon the surface of the body, and then the soul remains whole, and the life is preserved.

Now, how these four principles are mixed, and in what matter they subsist, I am very desirous to explain, but the poorness of the Latin tongue prevents me, against my will; yet, as far as that permits, I will endeavor briefly to touch upon this subject. The seeds then of these principles move so confusedly among themselves, that no one of them can be separated from another, nor is there any place severally allotted to each, where anyone can act by itself; but they are, as it were, many powers of the same body. As in a piece of any animal there is smell, and heat, and taste, and out of all these one perfect body is composed; so heat, air, and the invisible vapor, and that fourth active quality, (which is the principle of motion to the other three), and from which all sensible motion rises through the limbs) compose by their mixture one subtle substance, or one Nature. This fourth something is deeply fixed in the inmost recesses of the

body, nor is there anything in the whole body more secretly and inwardly placed; it is, as it were, the very soul of the soul itself: For as in the limbs, and through all the body, the united force and power of the mind and soul are hid and unseen, because they are formed of small and few seeds, so this something without a name, being composed of minute principals, lies deep and concealed; it is the very soul of the whole soul itself, and governs the whole body.

By the same rule, it is necessary that the vapor, the air, and the heat be so properly mingled through the limbs, and be disposed either higher or lower than one another, that one certain nature may be formed from all; lest the power of the heat, the vapor, and the air, being divided and separately placed, might destroy the sense, and prevent its operation. Heat prevails in the mind when the creature is enraged, grows hot, and fire sparkles from its glowing eyes. Much vapor is cold, and the companion of fear, it excites horror in the body, and shakes the limbs; but air is of a calm and mild quality, it resides in a quiet breast, and a serene countenance. But those have most heat whose hearts are fierce, and whose angry mind are soon inflamed into passion. of this sort, in the first place, is the distracted Fury of lions, who, roaring, often burst their very breast, and are unable to contain the torrent of Rage that swells within. The cold temperature of the deer has more of vapor, and sooner incites a chillness in the limbs, which causes a trembling motion through the whole body. But the nature of the ox consists more of soft air, nor does the smoky firebrand of anger (that spreads a shade of black darkness over the mind) too much inflame him, nor is he stupefied by the darts of chilling fear, but his nature is placed between both, between the fierce lion and the deer. The mind of man is formed of the same principles; though the discipline of philosophy may polish and correct some, yet it leaves behind the marks of the original nature of the mind, nor are we to think that the seeds of vice can be wholly rooted out. One man, we see, runs more rashly into passion, another is more disposed to fear, and a third is apt to be more merciful than just; It is impossible but the various tempers of mankind, and actions that follow them, must differ in many other instances, the reasons of which are at present out of my power to explain; nor can I find words to express that variety of figures by which the seeds are distinguished, and from which this variety of disposition is produced. This, however, may justly be asserted on this occasion: that the traces of original nature which cannot be corrected by the rules of reason are so very small that nothing hinders us from leading a life worthy of the Gods.

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.

Munro:

We are not however to suppose that this nature is single. For a certain subtle spirit mixed with heat quits men at death, and then the heat draws air along with it; there being no heat which has not air too mixed with it: for since its nature is rare, many first beginnings of air must move about through it. Thus the nature of the mind is proved to be threefold; and yet these things all together are not sufficient to produce sense; since the fact of the case does not admit that any of these can produce sense-giving motions and the thoughts which a man turns over in mind. Thus some fourth nature too must be added to these: it is altogether without name; than it nothing exists more nimble or more fine, or of smaller or smoother elements: it first transmits the sense-giving motions through the frame; for it is first stirred, made up as it is of small particles; next the heat and the unseen force of the spirit receive the motions, then the air; then all things are set in action, the blood is stirred, every part of the flesh is filled with sensation; last of all the feeling is transmitted to the bones and marrow, whether it be one of pleasure or an opposite excitement. No pain however can lightly pierce thus far nor any sharp malady make its way in, without all things being so thoroughly disordered that no room is left for life and the parts of the soul fly abroad through all the pores of the body. But commonly a stop is put to these motions on the surface as it were of the body: for this reason we are able to retain life.

Now though I would fain explain in what way these are mixed up together, by what means united, when they exert their powers, the poverty of my native speech deters me sorely against my will: yet will I touch upon them and in summary fashion to the best of my ability: the first-beginnings by their mutual motions are interlaced in such a way that, none of them can be separated by itself, nor can the function of any go on divided from the rest by any interval; but they are so to say the several powers of one body. Even so in any flesh of living creature you please without exception there is smell and some color and a savor, and yet out of all these is made up one single bulk of body. Thus the heat and the air and the unseen power of the spirit mixed together produce a single nature, together with that nimble force which transmits to them from itself the origin of motion; by which means sense-giving motion first takes its rise through the fleshly frame. For this nature lurks secreted in its inmost depths, and nothing in our

body is farther beneath all ken than it, and more than this it is the very soul of the whole soul. Just in the same way as the power of the mind and the function of the soul are latent in our limbs and throughout our body, because they are each formed of small and few bodies: even so, you are to know, this nameless power made of minute bodies is concealed and is moreover the very soul so to say of the whole soul, and reigns supreme in the whole body.

On a like principle the spirit and air and heat must, as they exert their powers, be mixed up together through the frame, and one must ever be more out of view or more prominent than another, that a single substance may be seen to be formed from the union of all, lest the heat and spirit apart by themselves and the power of the air apart by itself should destroy sense and dissipate it by their disunion. Thus the mind possesses that heat which it displays when it boils up in anger and fire flashes from the keen eyes; there is too much cold spirit, comrade of fear, which spreads a shivering over the limbs and stirs the whole frame; yes and there is also that condition of still air which has place when the breast is calm and the looks cheerful. But they have more of the hot whose keen heart and passionate mind lightly boil up in anger. Foremost in this class comes the fierce violence of lions who often as they chafe break their hearts with their roaring and cannot contain within their breast the billows of their rage. Then the chilly mind of stags is fuller of the spirit and more quickly rouses through all the flesh its icy currents which cause a shivering motion to pass over the limbs. But the nature of oxen has its life rather from the still air, and never does the smoky torch of anger applied to it stimulate it too much, shedding over it the shadow of murky gloom, nor is it transfixed and stiffened by the icy shafts of fear: it lies between the other two, stags and cruel lions. And thus it is with mankind: however much teaching renders some equally refined, it yet leaves behind those earliest traces of the nature of each mind; and we are not to suppose that evil habits can be so thoroughly plucked up by the roots, that one man shall not be more prone than another to keen anger, a second shall not be somewhat more quickly assailed by fear, a third shall not take some things more meekly than is right. In many other points there must be differences between the varied natures of men and the tempers which follow upon these; though at present I am unable to set forth the hidden causes of these or to find names enough for the different shapes which belong to the first-beginnings from which shapes arises this diversity of things. What herein I think I may affirm is this: traces of the different natures left behind, which reason is unable to expel from us, are so exceedingly slight that there is nothing to hinder us from living a life worthy of gods.

Well this nature is contained by the whole body and is in turn the body's guardian and the cause of its existence; for the two adhere together with common roots and cannot, it is plain, be riven asunder without destruction. Even as it is not easy to pluck the perfume out of lumps of frankincense without quite destroying its nature as well; so it is not easy to withdraw from the whole body the nature of the mind and soul without dissolving all alike. With first-beginnings so interlaced from their earliest birth are they formed and gifted with a life of joint partnership, and it is plain that the faculty of the body and of the mind cannot feel separately, each alone without the other's power, but sense is kindled throughout our flesh and blown into flame between the two by the joint motions on the part of both. Moreover the body by itself is

never either begotten or grows or, it is plain, continues to exist after death. For not in the way that the liquid of water often loses the heat which has been given to it, yet is not for that reason itself riven in pieces, but remains unimpaired, - not in this way, I say, can the abandoned frame endure the separation of the soul, but riven in pieces it utterly perishes and rots away. Thus the mutual connections of body and soul from the first moment of their existence learn the vital motions even while hid in the body and womb of the mother, so that no separation can take place without mischief and ruin. Thus you may see that, since the cause of existence lies in their joint action, their nature too must be a joint nature. Furthermore, if any one tries to disprove that the body feels and believes that the soul mixed through the whole body takes upon it this motion which we name sense, he combats even manifest and undoubted facts. For who will ever bring forward any explanation of what the body's feeling is, except that which the plain fact of the case has itself given and taught to us? But when the soul it is said has departed, the body throughout is without sense; yes, for it loses what was not its own peculiar property in life; ay and much else it loses, before that soul is driven out of it.

Bailey:

Nevertheless we must not think that this nature is simple. For it is a certain thin breath that deserts the dying, mingled with heat, and heat moreover draws air with it; nor indeed is there any heat, that has not air too mixed with it. For because its nature is rare, it must needs be that many first-beginnings of air move about in it. Already then we have found the nature of the soul to be triple; and yet all these things are not enough to create sensation, since the mind does not admit that any of these can create the motions that bring sensation [or the thoughts of the mind]. It must needs be then that some fourth nature too be added to these. But it is altogether without name; than it there exists nothing more nimble, nothing more fine, nor made of smaller or smoother particles. It first sends abroad the motions that bring sensation among the limbs: for it is first stirred, being made up of small shapes; then heat receives the motions and the hidden power of wind, and then air; then all things are set moving, the blood receives the shock and all the flesh feels the thrill; last of all it passes to the bones and marrow, be it pleasure or the heat of opposite kind. Yet not for naught can pain pierce thus far within, nor any biting ill pass through, but that all things are so disordered that there is no more place for life, and the parts of the soul scatter abroad through all the pores of the body. But for the most part a limit is set to these motions, as it were, on the surface of the body: and by this means we avail to keep our life.

Now, as I long to give account in what way these parts are mingled one with another, and in what manner bound together so that they can act, against my will the poverty of my country's tongue holds me back; yet, despite that, I will touch the theme, as best I can in brief. For the first-beginnings course to and fro among themselves with the motions of first-beginnings, so that no single one can be put apart, nor can its powers be set in play divided from others by empty space, but they are, as it were, the many forces of a single body. Even as in the flesh of any living creature anywhere there is smell and a certain heat and savour, and yet of all these is made up the bulk of a single body. Thus heat and air and the hidden power of wind mingled create one nature together with that nimble force, which sends among them from itself the

beginning of motion, whence the motion that brings sensation first arises throughout the flesh. For right deep within this nature lies hid far below, nor is there anything further beneath than this in our bodies, and it is moreover the very soul of the whole soul. Even as in our limbs and our whole body the force of the mind and the power of the soul is secretly mingled, because it is formed of small and rare bodies. So, you see, this force without a name, made of tiny bodies, lies concealed, and is moreover, as it were, the very soul of the whole soul and holds sway in the whole body.

In like manner it must needs be that wind and air and heat act mingled together throughout the limbs, and one is more above or below the rest, yet so that one single thing is seen to be composed of all; lest heat and wind apart, and apart from them the power of air, should put an end to sensation, and by their separation break it up. Moreover the mind possesses that heat, which it dons when it boils with rage, and the fire flashes more keenly from the eyes. Much cold breath too it has, which goes along with fear, and starts a shuddering in the limbs and stirs the whole frame. And it has too that condition of air lulled to rest, which comes to pass when the breast is calm and the face unruffled. But those creatures have more of heat, whose fiery heart and passionate mind easily boils up in anger. Foremost in this class is the fierce force of lions, who often as they groan break their hearts with roaring, and cannot contain in their breast the billows of their wrath. But the cold heart of deer is more full of wind, and more quickly it rouses the chilly breath in its flesh, which makes a shuddering motion start in the limbs. But the nature of oxen draws its life rather from calm air, nor ever is the smoking torch of anger set to it to rouse it overmuch, drenching it with the shadow of murky mist, nor is it pierced and frozen by the chill shafts of fear: it has its place midway between the two, the deer and the raging lions. So is it with the race of men. However much training gives some of them an equal culture, yet it leaves those first traces of the nature of the mind of each. Nor must we think that such maladies can be plucked out by the roots, but that one man will more swiftly fall into bitter anger, another be a little sooner assailed by fear, while a third will take some things more gently than is right. And in many other things it must needs be that the diverse natures of men differ, and the habits that follow thereon; but I cannot now set forth the secret causes of these, nor discover names for all the shapes of the first atoms, whence arises this variety in things. One thing herein I see that I can affirm, that so small are the traces of these natures left, which reason could not dispel for us, that nothing hinders us from living a life worthy of the gods.

This nature then of the soul is protected by the whole body, and is itself the guardian of the body, and the cause of its life; for the two cling together by common roots, and it is seen that they cannot be torn asunder without destruction. Even as it is not easy to tear out the scent from lumps of frankincense, but that its nature too passes away. So it is not easy to draw out the nature of mind and soul from the whole body, but that all alike is dissolved. With first-beginnings so closely interlaced from their very birth are they begotten, endowed with a life shared in common, nor, as is clear to see, can the power of body or mind feel apart, either for itself without the force of the other, but by the common motions of the two on this side and on that is sensation kindled and fanned throughout our flesh. Moreover, the body is never begotten by itself, nor grows alone, nor is seen to last on after death. For never, as the moisture of water often gives off the heat, which has been lent to it, and is not for that reason

torn asunder itself, but remains unharmed, never, I say, in this way can the abandoned frame bear the separation of the soul, but it utterly perishes torn asunder and rots away. So from the beginning of existence body and soul, in mutual union, learn the motions that give life, yea, even when hidden in the mother's limbs and womb, so that separation cannot come to pass without hurt and ruin; so that you can see, since the cause of their life is linked together, that their natures too must be linked in one. For the rest, if any one is for proving that the body does not feel, and believes that it is the soul mingled with the whole body that takes up this motion, which we call sensation, he is fighting even against plain and true facts. For who will ever tell us what the feeling of the body is, if it be not what the clear fact itself has shown and taught us? 'But when the soul has passed away the body is utterly deprived of sensation.' Yes, for it loses that which was not its own in life, and many other things besides it loses, when it is driven out of life.