

Úryvek z Platónova 7.listu

[342a] But concerning these studies I am minded to speak still more at length; since the subject with which I am dealing will perhaps be clearer when I have thus spoken. For there is a certain true argument which confronts the man who ventures to write anything at all of these matters, an argument which, although I have frequently stated it in the past, seems to require statement also at the present time.

Every existing object has three things which are the necessary means by which knowledge of that object is acquired; and the knowledge itself is a fourth thing; and as a fifth one must postulate the object itself which is cognizable [342b] and true. First of these comes the name; secondly the definition; thirdly the image; fourthly the knowledge. If you wish, then, to understand what I am now saying, take a single example and learn from it what applies to all. There is an object called a circle, which has for its name the word we have just mentioned and, secondly, it has a definition, composed of names and verbs; for “that which is everywhere equidistant from the extremities to the center” will be the definition of that object which has for its name “round” and “spherical” and “circle.” [342c] And in the third place there is that object which is in course of being portrayed and obliterated, or of being shaped with a lathe, and falling into decay; but none of these affections is suffered by the circle itself, whereto all these others are related inasmuch as it is distinct therefrom. Fourth comes knowledge and intelligence and true opinion regarding these objects; and these we must assume to form a single whole, which does not exist in vocal utterance or in bodily forms but in souls; whereby it is plain that it differs both from the nature of the circle itself and from the three previously mentioned. And of those four [342d] intelligence approaches most nearly in kinship and similarity to the fifth, and the rest are further removed.

[342a] ἔτι δὲ μακρότερα περὶ αὐτῶν ἐν νῶ μοι γέγονεν εἰπεῖν· τάχα γὰρ ἂν περὶ ὧν λέγω σαφέστερον ἂν εἴη λεχθέντων αὐτῶν. ἔστι γὰρ τις λόγος ἀληθής, ἐναντίος τῷ τολμήσαντι γράφειν τῶν τοιούτων καὶ ὀτιοῦν, πολλάκις μὲν ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ καὶ πρόσθεν ῥηθεῖς, ἔοικεν δ’ οὖν εἶναι καὶ νῦν λεκτέος.

ἔστιν τῶν ὄντων ἑκάστω, δι’ ὧν τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἀνάγκη παραγίγνεσθαι, τρία, τέταρτον δ’ αὐτῆ—πέμπτον δ’ αὐτὸ [342b] τιθέναι δεῖ ὃ δὴ γνωστόν τε καὶ ἀληθῶς ἔστιν ὄν—ἐν μὲν ὄνομα, δεύτερον δὲ λόγος, τὸ δὲ τρίτον εἶδωλον, τέταρτον δὲ ἐπιστήμη. περὶ ἐν οὖν λαβὲ βουλόμενος μαθεῖν τὸ νῦν λεγόμενον, καὶ πάντων οὕτω πέρι νόησον. κύκλος ἐστὶν τι λεγόμενον, ὡς τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ ἔστιν ὄνομα ὃ νῦν ἐφθέγγεθα. λόγος δ’ αὐτοῦ τὸ δεύτερον, ἐξ ὀνομάτων καὶ ῥημάτων συγκείμενος· τὸ γὰρ ἐκ τῶν ἐσχάτων ἐπὶ τὸ μέσον ἴσον ἀπέχον πάντη, λόγος ἂν εἴη ἐκείνου ὡπερ στρογγύλον καὶ περιφερὲς [342c] ὄνομα καὶ κύκλος. τρίτον δὲ τὸ ζωγραφούμενόν τε καὶ ἐξαλειφόμενον καὶ торνευόμενον καὶ ἀπολλύμενον· ὧν αὐτὸς ὁ κύκλος, ὃν πέρι πάντ’ ἔστιν ταῦτα, οὐδὲν πάσχει, τούτων ὡς ἕτερον ὄν. τέταρτον δὲ ἐπιστήμη καὶ νοῦς ἀληθής τε δόξα περὶ ταῦτ’ ἔστιν· ὡς δὲ ἐν τούτῳ αὐτὸ πᾶν θετέον, οὐκ ἐν φωναῖς οὐδ’ ἐν σωμάτων σχήμασιν ἀλλ’ ἐν ψυχαῖς ἐνόν, ὡς δὴλον ἕτερόν τε ὄν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κύκλου τῆς φύσεως τῶν [342d] τε ἐμπροσθεν λεχθέντων τριῶν. τούτων δὲ ἐγγύτατα μὲν συγγενεῖα καὶ ὁμοιότητι τοῦ πέμπτου νοῦς πεπλησίακεν, τᾶλλα δὲ πλεόν ἀπέχει.

The same is true alike of the straight and of the spherical form, and of color, and of the good and the fair and the just, and of all bodies whether manufactured or naturally produced (such as fire and water and all such substances), and of all living creatures, and of all moral actions or passions in souls. For unless [342e] a man somehow or other grasps the four of these, he will never perfectly acquire knowledge of the fifth. Moreover, these four attempt to express the quality of each object no less than its real essence, owing to the weakness inherent in language; [343a] and for this reason, no man of intelligence will ever venture to commit to it the concepts of his reason, especially when it is unalterable--as is the case with what is formulated in writing.

But here again you must learn further the meaning of this last statement. Every one of the circles which are drawn in geometric exercises or are turned by the lathe is full of what is opposite to the fifth, since it is in contact with the straight everywhere; whereas the circle itself, as we affirm, contains within itself no share greater or less of the opposite nature. And none of the objects, we affirm, has any fixed name, [343b] nor is there anything to prevent forms which are now called "round" from being called "straight," and the "straight" "round"; and men will find the names no less firmly fixed when they have shifted them and apply them in an opposite sense. Moreover, the same account holds good of the Definition also, that, inasmuch as it is compounded of names and verbs, it is in no case fixed with sufficient firmness. And so with each of the Four, their inaccuracy is an endless topic; but, as we mentioned a moment ago, the main point is this, that while there are two separate things, the real essence and the quality, [343c] and the soul seeks to know not the quality but the essence, each of the Four proffers to the soul either in word or in concrete form that which is not sought; and by thus causing each object which is described or exhibited to be always easy of refutation by the senses, it fills practically all men with all manner of perplexity and uncertainty.

ταῦτόν δὴ περὶ τε εὐθέος ἅμα καὶ περιφεροῦς σχήματος καὶ χροῆς, περὶ τε ἀγαθοῦ καὶ καλοῦ καὶ δικαίου, καὶ περὶ σώματος ἅπαντος σκευαστοῦ τε καὶ κατὰ φύσιν γεγονότος, πυρὸς ὕδατός τε καὶ τῶν τοιούτων πάντων, καὶ ζώου σύμπαντος πέρι καὶ ἐν ψυχαῖς ἦθους, καὶ περὶ ποιήματα καὶ παθήματα σύμπαντα· οὐ γὰρ ἂν τούτων [342e] μὴ τις τὰ τέτταρα λάβῃ ἄμῳς γέ πως, οὐποτε τελέως ἐπιστήμης τοῦ πέμπτου μέτοχος ἔσται. πρὸς γὰρ τούτοις ταῦτα οὐχ ἦττον ἐπιχειρεῖ τὸ ποῖόν τι περὶ ἕκαστον δηλοῦν [343a] ἢ τὸ ὄν ἕκαστου διὰ τὸ τῶν λόγων ἀσθενές· ὧν ἕνεκα νῦν ἔχων οὐδεὶς τολμήσει ποτὲ εἰς αὐτὸ τιθέναι τὰ νενοημένα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα εἰς ἀμετακίνητον, ὃ δὴ πάσχει τὰ γεγραμμένα τύποις. τοῦτο δὲ πάλιν αὐτὸ νῦν λεγόμενον δεῖ μαθεῖν. κύκλος ἕκαστος τῶν ἐν ταῖς πράξεσι γραφομένων ἢ καὶ τορνευθέντων μεστὸς τοῦ ἐναντίου ἐστὶν τῷ πέμπτῳ—τοῦ γὰρ εὐθέος ἐφάπτεται πάντῃ—αὐτὸς δέ, φαμέν, ὃ κύκλος οὔτε τι μικρότερον οὔτε μείζον τῆς ἐναντίας ἔχει ἐν αὐτῷ φύσεως. ὄνομά τε αὐτῶν φαμέν οὐδὲν οὐδενὶ [343b] βέβαιον εἶναι, κωλύειν δ' οὐδὲν τὰ νῦν στρογγύλα καλούμενα εὐθέα κεκλήσθαι τὰ τε εὐθέα δὴ στρογγύλα, καὶ οὐδὲν ἦττον βεβαίως ἔξειν τοῖς μεταθεμένοις καὶ ἐναντίως καλοῦσιν. καὶ μὴν περὶ λόγου γε ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος, εἴπερ ἐξ ὀνομάτων καὶ ῥημάτων σύγκειται, μηδὲν ἰκανῶς βεβαίως εἶναι βέβαιον· μυρίος δὲ λόγος αὐτὸ περὶ ἕκαστου τῶν τεττάρων ὡς ἀσαφές, τὸ δὲ μέγιστον, ὅπερ εἶπομεν ὀλίγον ἔμπροσθεν, ὅτι δυοῖν ὄντοιν, τοῦ τε ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ποιοῦ τινος, οὐ τὸ [343c] ποῖόν τι, τὸ δὲ τί, ζητούσης εἰδέναι τῆς ψυχῆς, τὸ μὴ ζητούμενον ἕκαστον τῶν τεττάρων προτεῖνον τῇ ψυχῇ λόγῳ τε καὶ κατ' ἔργα, αἰσθήσεσιν εὐέλεγκτον τὸ τε λεγόμενον καὶ δεικνύμενον αἰ παρεχόμενον ἕκαστον, ἀπορίας τε καὶ ἀσαφείας ἐμπίμπλησι πάσης ὡς ἔπος εἶπεν πάντ' ἄνδρα.

In respect, however, of those other objects the truth of which, owing to our bad training, we usually do not so much as seek--being content with such of the images as are proffered,--those of us who answer are not made to look ridiculous by those who question, [343d] we being capable of analysing and convicting the Four. But in all cases where we compel a man to give the Fifth as his answer and to explain it, anyone who is able and willing to upset the argument gains the day, and makes the person who is expounding his view by speech or writing or answers appear to most of his hearers to be wholly ignorant of the subjects about which he is attempting to write or speak; for they are ignorant sometimes of the fact that it is not the soul of the writer or speaker that is being convicted but the nature of each of the Four, which is essentially defective. But it is the methodical study [343e] of all these stages, passing in turn from one to another, up and down, which with difficulty implants knowledge, when the man himself, like his object, is of a fine nature; but if his nature is bad--and, in fact, the condition of most men's souls in respect of learning and of what are termed [344a] "morals" is either naturally bad or else corrupted,--then not even Lynceus himself could make such folk see. In one word, neither receptivity nor memory will ever produce knowledge in him who has no affinity with the object, since it does not germinate to start with in alien states of mind; consequently neither those who have no natural connection or affinity with things just, and all else that is fair, although they are both receptive and retentive in various ways of other things, nor yet those who possess such affinity but are unreceptive and unretentive--none, I say, of these will ever learn to the utmost possible extent [344b] the truth of virtue nor yet of vice. For in learning these objects it is necessary to learn at the same time both what is false and what is true of the whole of Existence, and that through the most diligent and prolonged investigation, as I said at the commencement ; and it is by means of the examination of each of these objects, comparing one with another--names and definitions, visions and sense-perceptions,--proving them by kindly proofs and employing questionings and answerings that are void of envy--it is by such means, and hardly so, that there bursts out the light of intelligence and reason regarding each object in the mind of him who uses every effort of which mankind is capable.

ἐν οἷσι μὲν οὖν μὴδ' εἰθισμένοι τὸ ἀληθὲς ζητεῖν ἔσμεν ὑπὸ πονηρᾶς τροφῆς, ἕξαρκεῖ δὲ τὸ προταθὲν τῶν εἰδῶλων, οὐ καταγέλαστοι γιγνόμεθα ὑπ' ἀλλήλων, οἱ ἐρωτώμενοι ὑπὸ [343d] τῶν ἐρωτῶντων, δυναμένων δὲ τὰ τέτταρα διαρρίπτειν τε καὶ ἐλέγχειν· ἐν οἷς δ' ἂν τὸ πέμπτον ἀποκρίνασθαι καὶ δηλοῦν ἀναγκάζωμεν, ὁ βουλόμενος τῶν δυναμένων ἀνατρέπειν κρατεῖ. καὶ ποιεῖ τὸν ἐξηγούμενον ἐν λόγοις ἢ γράμμασιν ἢ ἀποκρίσεσιν τοῖς πολλοῖς τῶν ἀκουόντων δοκεῖν μὴδὲν γινώσκειν ὧν ἂν ἐπιχειρῇ γράφειν ἢ λέγειν, ἀγνοούντων ἐνίοτε ὡς οὐχ ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ γράψαντος ἢ λέξαντος ἐλέγχεται, ἀλλ' ἡ τῶν τεττάρων φύσις ἑκάστου, πεφυκυῖα [343e] φαύλως. ἡ δὲ διὰ πάντων αὐτῶν διαγωγή, ἄνω καὶ κάτω μεταβαίνουσα ἐφ' ἑκάστον, μόγις ἐπιστήμην ἐνέτεκεν εὐ πεφυκότης εὐ πεφυκότη· κακῶς δὲ ἂν φυῇ, ὡς ἡ τῶν πολλῶν ἕξις τῆς ψυχῆς εἰς τε τὸ μαθεῖν εἰς τε τὰ λεγόμενα ἦθη [344a] πέφυκεν, τὰ δὲ διέφθαρται, οὐδ' ἂν ὁ Λυγκεὺς ἴδειν ποιήσειεν τοὺς τοιοῦτους. ἐνὶ δὲ λόγῳ, τὸν μὴ συγγενῆ τοῦ πράγματος οὐτ' ἂν εὐμάθεια ποιήσειεν ποτε οὔτε μνήμη--τὴν ἀρχὴν γὰρ ἐν ἀλλοτρίαις ἕξεσιν οὐκ ἐγγίγνεται--ὥστε ὅποσοι τῶν δικαίων τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα καλὰ μὴ προσφυεῖς εἰσιν καὶ συγγενεῖς, ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλων εὐμαθεῖς ἅμα καὶ μνήμονες, οὐδ' ὅσοι συγγενεῖς, δυσμαθεῖς δὲ καὶ ἀμνήμονες, οὐδένες τούτων μήποτε μάθωσιν ἀλήθειαν ἀρετῆς εἰς [344b] τὸ δυνατόν οὐδὲ κακίας. ἅμα γὰρ αὐτὰ ἀνάγκη μανθάνειν καὶ τὸ ψεῦδος ἅμα καὶ ἀληθὲς τῆς ὅλης οὐσίας, μετὰ τριβῆς πάσης καὶ χρόνου πολλοῦ, ὅπερ ἐν ἀρχαῖς εἶπον· μόγις δὲ τριβόμενα πρὸς ἀλληλα αὐτῶν ἑκαστα, ὀνόματα καὶ λόγοι ὄψεις τε καὶ αἰσθήσεις, ἐν εὐμενέσιν ἐλέγχοις ἐλεγχόμενα καὶ ἄνευ φθόνων ἐρωτήσεσιν καὶ ἀποκρίσεσιν χρωμένων, ἐξέλαμψε φρόνησις περὶ ἑκάστον καὶ νοῦς, συντείνων ὅτι [344c] μάλιστ' εἰς δύναμιν ἀνθρωπίνην.