

## NATURAL FRAGMENTS OF THE FIRST PHILOSOPHERS

### THALES

Water is the beginning of all things.

### ANAXIMANDER

The unlimited is the beginning of existing things. That from which existing things come to be is also that into which they are corrupted by necessity. For they render justice and give up injustice to one another according to the order of time. (Anaximander, DK 1)

The nature of the unlimited is everlasting and does not grow old. (Anaximander, DK 2)

The unlimited is immortal and indestructible. (Anaximander, DK 3)

### ANAXIMENES

Just as our soul, being air, holds us together, so do breath and air surround the whole world. (Anaximenes, DK 2)

### PYTHAGORAS

The harmony of the octave comes from the ratio of two to one.

### HERACLITUS

Nature loves to hide. (Heraclitus, DK 123)

It is not possible to step twice into the same river. (Heraclitus, DK 91)

We step and do not step into the same rivers; we are and we are not. (Heraclitus, DK 49a)

The sun is new every day. (Heraclitus, DK 6)

Cold things become warm and the warm becomes cold; the wet dries, and the dry becomes wet. (Heraclitus, DK 126)

The same in us is the living and the dead, the awake and the asleep, the young and the old. For the former having changed are the latter, and again, these having changed are the former. (Heraclitus, DK 88)

Hesiod is the teacher of most men. They believe he knew very many things who did not know day and night. For they are one. (Heraclitus, DK 57)

Changing, it rests. (Heraclitus, DK 84a)

The hidden harmony is better than the apparent. (Heraclitus, DK 54)

They do not understand how that which is opposed agrees with itself. There is a harmony of opposites, as in the case of the bow and the lyre. (Heraclitus, DK 51)

The opposite [is] useful, and from those differing [comes the] most beautiful harmony and all things come to be by strife. (Heraclitus, DK 8)

War is the father of all things, the king of all things, and these he has shown gods but those men, and these he has made slaves and those free. (Heraclitus, DK 53)

We must know that war is common and strife is justice, and that all things come into being by strife and fate [necessity]. (Heraclitus, DK 80)

It is wise, listening not to me but to reason, to agree that all things are one. (Heraclitus, DK 50)

All things are exchanged for fire and fire, for all things; just as goods for gold and gold for goods. (Heraclitus, DK 90)

Beginning and end are common in the circumference of the circle.  
(Heraclitus, DK 103)

The way up and down is one and the same. (Heraclitus, DK 60)

The death of earth is water coming to be and the death of water is air coming to be and of air, fire and the reverse. The death of fire is coming to be for air, and the death of air is coming to be for water. (Heraclitus, DK 76)

It is death to souls to become water, and death to water to become earth; water comes to be from earth and the soul from water. (Heraclitus, DK 36)

This universe, which is the same for all, no god or man has made, but it always was, is and will be an everlasting fire, kindled in measures and extinguished in measures. (Heraclitus, DK 30)

The most beautiful universe is a heap piled up at random.  
(Heraclitus, DK 124)

One could not find in going the ends of the soul, having traveled every road - so deep is the reason it has. (Heraclitus, DK 45)

### EMPEDOCLES

Hear first the four roots of all things: bright Zeus, life-giving Hera, and Hades and Nestis who moistens with tears the springs of mortals. (Empedocles, DK 6)

Come now. I will tell you first...from what comes to be visible all the things we now see: the earth and the sea swelling with many waves and the moist lower air and the Titan upper air which binds tight all these things around in a circle. (Empedocles, DK 38)

But the pleasing earth in its broad melting pots received two of the eight parts of glittering Nestis and four of Hephaistos. And these became white bones begotten divinely by the gluing of harmony. (Empedocles, DK 96)

The earth, anchored in the harbors of Cypris came together with these in about equal measure, with Hephaistos, water and the all-shining upper air either a little more or less than their greater share. And from thee came blood and the forms of other flesh. (Empedocles, DK 98)

And I will tell you another thing. There is no birth of any mortal thing, nor end in destructive death, but there is only a mixing and an exchange of what has been mixed; birth, however, is a name given to these by men (Empedocles, DK 8)

But they, when these have been mixed in a way suited to men or to the race of wild beasts or to bushes or birds of prey, say then that this has been born; and when these have been separated, they call it wretched death. They do not name these things rightly, but I also follow the custom. (Empedocles, DK 9)

Fools. For they have no far reaching minds who think that what before was not comes to be or that anything dies and is destroyed utterly in every way. (Empedocles, DK 11)

For it is impossible that anything comes to be from what in no way is, and that what-is should perish completely is not accomplished or heard of. For it will always be there where anyone ever puts it. (Empedocles, DK 12)

For a wise man would not guess such things in his mind as that as long as they live what they call life, so long they are, and experience wretched things and good things; but that before mortals were fastened together and after they are unfastened, they are then nothing. (Empedocles, DK 15)

Nor does anything of the whole become empty or overfull. (Empedocles, DK 13)

Nothing of the whole is empty; so whence could anything additional come? (Empedocles, DK 14)

I shall tell something double: at one time it grew from the many to be only one; at another time, on the other hand, it grew apart from the one to be many. There is a double birth of mortals and a double death. The coming together of all things gives birth to and destroys one; the other, on the contrary, nourished as

things grow apart, flies in all directions. And in no place do these things stop taking turns forever: at one time, all things come together by love; at another time again, everything is carried away by the hate of strife. Thus, insofar as the one is accustomed to grow from the many and again the many spring from the one breaking up; in this way, they come to be and there is no lasting life for them; but insofar as they never stop taking turns forever, in this way they are always immovable throughout the cycle.

But come listen to my words for truly learning causes the mind to grow. For as I said before, making known the ends of my words. I shall tell about something twofold. For at one time there grew to be only one out of the many; at another time again, the many grew apart from the one - fire and water and earth and the immense height of air and destructive strife apart from these equal in weight everywhere, and love amidst them, equal in length and width. But look at her with your mind, and do not sit with your eyes in amazement. It is she who is recognized to be inborn in the limbs of mortals by whom they think friendly things and achieve concord calling her by the name of Joy or Aphrodite. No mortal man has found her out, going to and fro among them, but you listen to the undeceiving course of my words.

All these are equal and are of the same generation. Each one cares for its own position by means of the character belonging to it. And they hold sway in turn as time revolves. And besides these, nothing comes into being nor ceases to be. If they had been perishing continually, they would be no longer. And what could increase the whole? And where could it come from? And where could it perish, since no place is empty of these things? But only these things are, and running through one another, they become different things at different times and are ever continuously alike.” (Empedocles, DK 17)

But come, behold the witness of my former words, if anything was lacking in their form: the sun bright to see and everywhere warm, and all the immortals steeped in heat and bright light, the rain everywhere dark and cold, and from the earth flow forth things solid and based on the soil. In hate they become endued with form and separated; in love, they come together and are desired by each other. From these come forth all the things that were and are and will be, trees and men and women, beasts and

birds of prey and fishes nurtured and living in the water, and the long-lived gods highest in honor. These alone are, but running through one another, they become different; so much are they changed through mixing. (Empedocles, DK 21)

As when painters decorate temple-offerings, men will taught about art by wisdom, these, when they have taken many-colored dyes with their hands, mix some more and some less in harmony and from these makes forms resembling all things, making trees and men and women, beasts and birds of prey and fish nurtured and living in water and the long-lived gods highest in honor; thus, let not deception overcome your mind that there is any other source of mortal things as appear in unspeakably great numbers; but know these things clearly for you have heard this account from a goddess (the Muse). (Empedocles, DK 23)

On it, many sides of foreheads without necks burst forth, and bare arms wandered, bereft of shoulders, and eyes wandered in need of foreheads. (Empedocles, DK 57)

But yet, when god was more mixed with god, these things fell together in whatever way everyone happened to meet; and many other things besides them continually came to be. (Empedocles, DK 59)

Many things were born with two faces and two breasts, offspring of cattle with faces of men, others the reverse, born of men with the heads of oxen, mixed in part from men and in part female by nature, adorned with dark limbs. (Empedocles, DK 61)

By earth, we see earth; by water, water; godlike air by air; destroying fire by fire; love by love; and hate by hate. (Empedocles, DK 109)

Nourished in the sea of blood, which goes in two directions, here especially is what men call thought, for the blood around the heart in men is thought. (Empedocles, DK 105)

## ANAXAGORAS

How could hair come from what is not hair, and flesh from what is not flesh? (Anaxagoras, DK 10)

All things were together, unlimited in number and smallness. For the small was also unlimited. And all things being together, nothing was clear because of smallness. Air and aether, both being unlimited, encompassed all things for these are the greatest in number and size among all things. (Anaxagoras, DK 1)

These things being so, it is necessary to think that there are many things of all kinds in all compounds and the seeds of all things having all kinds of shapes and colors and flavors. And men too were fitted together, and all other creatures which have soul. And the men possessed both inhabited cities and artificial works just like ourselves, and they had sun and moon and the rest, just as we have, and the earth produced for them many and diverse things, of which they collected the most useful, and now use them for their dwellings. This I say concerning separation, that it must have taken place not only with us, but elsewhere.

Before these things were separated, all things were together, and no color was clear. For the mixture of all things prevented this - of the moist and the dry, and of the hot and the cold, and of the bright and the dark, and of much earth in it, and of seeds infinite in multitude and nothing like each other. For none of the others are similar one to the other. These things being so, it is necessary to think that all things exist in the whole together. (Anaxagoras, DK 4)

Nor is there a smallest of the small, but there is always a smaller for what-is cannot cease to be [by being cut]. But there is also something greater than the great, and it is equal to the small in number, but each thing to itself is both great and small. (Anaxagoras, DK 3)

And since the parts of the large and the small are equal in number, thus all things must be in everything. Nor is it possible to exist apart from other things, but all things have a share of everything. Since a smallest cannot be, it is not able to be separated, or to come to be by itself, but just as the beginning, so now they are all together. Many things are in all things, and the things separated into the greater and the smaller are equal in number (Anaxagoras, DK 6)

The things in the one world are not separated from each other, nor cut off with an axe, neither the warm from the cold, nor the cold from the warm. (Anaxagoras, DK 8)

So the multitude of things separated cannot be known in word or in deed. (Anaxagoras, DK 7)

These things thus revolve and are separated by force and speed. And the speed makes the force. The speed of these things is not like the speed in any of the things that are now among men, but altogether many times as fast (Anaxagoras, DK 9)

The thick and the moist and the cold and the dark came together where now is the earth, and the thin and the warm and the dry went outward to the further part of the aether. (Anaxagoras, DK 15)

From these things as they separated off, the earth was solidified, from the clouds, water was separated, and from the water, earth, and from the earth, stones were solidified by the cold, and these things rush outward more than water. (Anaxagoras, DK 16)

The Greeks do not rightly take coming into being and perishing. Nothing comes to be or perishes, but is mixed and separated from existing things. And thus they would be right to call coming to be, mixing and perishing, separating. (Anaxagoras, DK 17)

These things having been thus separated, it is necessary to know that all things are neither more nor less; for it is not possible for more than all to be, but all things are forever equal. (Anaxagoras, DK 5)

And when the mind began to move things, it was separated from everything; and as much as the mind moved, all this was separated. As things were being moved and separated, the revolution made them separate even more (Anaxagoras, DK 13)

In everything there is a part of everything except mind, and there are also other things in which there is mind. (Anaxagoras, DK 11)

The mind, which always is, is indeed now where all other things are, in the whole surrounding mass, and in the things joined to it and in the things separated from it. (Anaxagoras, DK 14)

Other things have a part of everything, but mind is unlimited and self-ruling and is mixed with nothing, but is itself alone by itself. For if it were not by itself, but were mixed with something other, it would have a share of all things if it were mixed with any; for there is a part of everything in everything, as has been said by me in what goes before. And the things mixed with it would hinder it, so that it would rule over nothing like it does being alone by itself. For it is the thinnest of all things and the purest, and it has all knowledge about everything and has the greatest power. And mind rules all things which have life, both the greater and the lesser. And mind ruled over the whole revolution, so that it began to revolve in the beginning. And first it began to revolve from something small, but now it revolves over a greater distance, and it will revolve over more. And mind knows all the things mixed together and those separated off, and those divided. And mind set in order all things that were to be, and all things that were but now are not, and whatever is now and whatever things will be, and this revolution in which the stars and the sun and the moon and the air and the aether go round, having been separated off. This revolution has caused them to be separated. The thick is separated from the thin, and the warm from the cold, and the bright from the dark, and the dry from the moist. There are many parts of many things. Nothing is separated off nor divided entirely the one from the other, except mind. Every mind is similar, both the greater and the lesser. Nothing else is like anything else, but each thing is and was most clearly those things of which it has the most. (Anaxagoras, DK 12)

#### LEUCIPPUS

Nothing happens at random; but everything comes to be from reason and by necessity. (Leucippus, DK 2)

#### DEMOCRITUS

Sweet exists by custom, the bitter by custom, the warm by custom, the cold by custom, color by custom; but truly the atoms and the empty. (Democritus, DK 9)

Man is a little universe (*Microcosm*). (Democritus, DK 34)

We have become pupils in the most important things: of the spider for spinning and mending, of the swallow for building, and of the songsters, swan and nightingale, for singing, by way of imitation. (Democritus, DK 154)

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