

Fears and Aspirations of humans as expounded by Lucretius and Juvenal

Professor Kamani Jayasekera , Dept. of Western Classical Culture.

Fears and aspirations of man changes as civilisation takes its strides in evolution. Thus what primitive man wished for or tried to avert would be different from the prayers of a later age. What type of attraction would be fostered by a community concentrating on materialism and victories of war endeavours? Were what one wished for the same as what was good for them? On reading Roman history one recognizes such situations in the paths of its progress. The accent on power, one many observe, does have its imprint on its peoples. How would men of artistic ability, people with sensitive temperaments and moral obligations take such situations? How would they meet their poetic obligations in such an atmosphere?

In this study the first writer that would be concentrated on would be Lucretius. He lived in the period of Roman history just prior to the Roman Empire. At a period where Rome was venturing out to expand its powers. Lucretius's mission had been to expose and explain the doctrine of Epicureanism through poetry. On closer examination one is led to observe the moral tone that he had taken when scrutinizing the fears and aspirations of man. Lucretius's foresight if not procrastination could only be realized when reading Tacitus, the historian of the Roman Empire. The tone and technique in his presentation of historical incidents exposes to us what imprint power has had on the society and its individuals. However it is **Juvenal** the Satirist who clearly and with detail paints us a picture of the Empire. Juvenal would be studied not mainly for his expositions, but to learn what views he had on reasons for making the people behave thus. i.e. The fears and wishes of man.

The two writers are of two different time periods. They have also resorted to different modes of expression. But closer scrutiny proves that their aims and objectives seem to be founded on common grounds.

Lucretius (100-55 BC)

Titus Lucretius Carus had been a citizen of Rome. Although not much is known about his private life the general agreement that scholars have reached is the fact that he was probably born in 100 BC. However the undisputed fact remains that he was one of the greatest poets that Rome had produced. The modern readers are led to taste his poetic ability through his book, 'On the nature of the Universe'. On reading the treatise we feel that Lucretius had devoted his life to the exposition of the teaching of Epicurus - the materialistic philosopher. And this he had done through the art of poetry.

Epicurus who is believed to have lived in the 3rd century BC had sought to reach his gospel of salvation by appealing to common sense. However it is important to remember that one is tempted to find a trace of debt of Epicurus to the 5th Cen. BC atomists, Leucippus and Democritus. The Atomists were extreme materialists who founded their philosophy in the belief of indestructible matter. The atoms - That cannot be cut. Their philosophy consisted of

the exposition of Atoms, Empty space and the movement of the Atoms in the empty space which was automatic and devoid of any aim or intention.

Unshakable personal conviction in the teachings of Epicurus had made Lucretius turn away from war and politics - the normal occupations of a Roman gentleman. The whole treatise seems to have turned out to be an appeal to a disillusioned age to take comfort from the sanity of science. His hope, that tempted by the 'sweet honey of the muses'¹ they would 'swallow the bitter drought of the doctrine so that they would ultimately find peace. From the collapse of Classical civilisation, only one battered manuscript of the poem had been preserved to form the basis of all existing copies. It was much later that Lucretius began to be treated with respect as a serious attempt to explain the physical universe. Some even argued that his work could be used in defense of materialism and it was possible to argue that with minor modifications they could be reconciled with modern finding of science. But today the atom has been cut. However this fact has not been able to lessen the value of Lucretiu's poem as a poet's exposition of the scientific outlook.

Another glaring observation one could make of the philosophy is that like Epicurus, Lucretius two seems to stand out as opposing the traditional religion of the Romans. May be the reasons that led up to this were the omens and tabos that made up the substance of the then religion. The superstitions that were designed to terrorize man in to meek submission. Lucretius like Epicurus believed in the power of Nature. The working of the Universe. They found Nature blind, soulless and purposeless but with a beauty and majesty.

The aim of Epicurus was tranquility. It may be, being a philosopher, he enjoyed an equable temperament. But Lucretius obviously did not. He was a poet, with the temperament of a poet. A man of many moods. A poet more than a philosopher.

On reading Lucretius one is also tempted to notice his comments in various shades on the endeavours of man. These concerns regarding temptations, desires and fears of man and his aspirations almost takes on a religious note to a careful observer. A deep study of the subject proves that his comments on the prayers and fears of the individual does take on a moral tone. It is this that he had attempted to imprint in his reader through the intensity of the poet in him.

The above argument follows from the fact that he has constantly reminds us of what he had set out to do. Disposing the superstitions that were dominant in the minds of the Romans, imposed by their own religious beliefs.

'When human life lay groveling in all men's sight, crushed to the earth under the dead weight of superstition whose grim feathers laboured menacingly upon mortals from the four quarters of the sky, a man of Greece was first to raise mortal eyes in defiance, first to stand erect and brave the challenge. Fables of the gods did not crush him, nor the lightening flash and the growling menace of the sky. Rather they quickened his manhood, so that he, first of all men, longed to smash the constraining locks of nature's doors. The vital vigour of his mind prevailed.'²

And it is through poetry that Lucretius proposes to do so.

'By choice of words and the poet's art I can display before your mind a clear light by which you can gaze into heart of hidden things. This dread and darkness of the mind cannot be dispelled by the sunbeams, the shining shafts of day, but only by an understanding of the outward form and inner workings of nature.'³

'My art is not without a purpose, Physicians, when they wish to treat children with a nasty dose of wormwood, first smear the rim of the cup with a sweet coat of yellow honey They are tricked but not trapped. For the treatment restores them to health. In the same way our doctrine often seems unpalatable to those who have not sampled it, and the multitude shrink from it. That is why I have tried to administer it to you in the dulcet strains of poetry.'⁴

(Lucretius Bl.935)

If one understands the working of the universe and reality one would also realise the futility of their fears and desires. The main concerns of involving wealth and luxury. He attacks these quit effectively.

Luxury

.. What matter if there are no golden images of youths about the house, holding flaming torches in their right hands to illuminate banquets prolonged in to the night?

What matter if the hall does not sparkle with silver and gleam with gold, and no carved and gilded rafters rings to the music of the lute?⁵

To the earth-born generation in their naked state the lack of skins meant real discomfort through cold; but we are in no way discommoded by going without robes of purple, brocaded with gold and gorgeously emblazoned, so long as we have some plebian wrap to throw around us. So mankind is perpetually the victim of a pointless and futile martyrdom, fretting life away in fruitless worries through failure to realise what limit is set to acquisition and to the growth of genuine pleasure.⁶

Power, Status

Man's aspirations also consists of obtaining power and status. These prayers are also the sources of his fears. 'The fears and anxieties that dog the human breast do not shrink from the clash of arms or the fierce rain of missiles. They stalk unabashed among princes and potentates. They are not awe-struck by the gleam of gold or the bright sheen of purple robes.'⁷

'Wandering aimlessly in a vain search for the way of life, pitting their wits one against another, disputing for precedence, struggling night and day with unstinted effort to scale the pinnacles of wealth and power. O joyless hearts of men! O minds without vision! How dark and dangerous the life in which this tiny span is lived away! Do you not see that nature is

clamouring for two things only, a body free from pain, a mind released from worry and fear for the enjoyment of pleasurable sensations?⁸

And then again,

'Does the fear of Death retire from your breast and leave it carefree at the moment when you sight your warships ranging far and wide? Or do we not find such resources absurdly ineffective?⁹

'Men craved for fame and power so that their fortune might rest on a firm foundation and they might live out a peaceful life in the enjoyment of plenty. An idle dream. In struggling to gain the pinnacle of power they beset their own road with perils. And then from the very peak, as though by a thunderbolt, they are cast down by envy into a foul abyss of ignominy.¹⁰

Therefore the advice given by Lucretius is -

'Far better to lead a quiet life in subjection than to long for sovereign authority and lordship over kingdoms. So leave them to the blood and sweat of their wearisome unprofitable struggle along the narrow pathway of ambition.¹¹

Long life

Some people pray for long life. The logic of this wish Lucretius refuses to understand. According to the Epicurean philosophy, there is no after life. So the fear of the unknown would be baseless. It did not believe in transmigration or rebirth. What it believed was regeneration. Death is inevitable. Even the earth will crumble. So why not us?

'Often from fear of death mortals are gripped by such a hate of living and looking on the light that with anguished hearts they do themselves to death. They forget that this very fear is the foundations of their troubles; this it is that harasses conscience, snaps the bonds of friendship and hurls down virtue from the heights.¹²

'As children in blank darkness tremble and start at everything, so we in broad daylight are oppressed at times by fears as baseless as these horrors which children imagine coming upon them in the dark.¹³

'Death is nothing to us and no concern of ours, since our tenure of the mind is mortal. ...So when we shall be no more - when the union of body and spirit that engenders us has been disrupted - to us, who shall then be nothing, nothing by any hazard will happen anymore at all. Nothing will have power to stir our senses, not though earth be fused with sea and sea with sky.¹⁴

'Even if the matter that composes us should be reassembled by time after our death and brought back into its present state - if the light of life were given to us a new - even that contingency would still be no concern of ours once the chain of our identity had been snapped.¹⁵

'Why then, you silly creature, do you not retire as a guest who has had his fill of life and take your care - free rest with a quiet mind.¹⁶

Is there anything terrifying in the sight - anything depressing - anything that is not more restful than the soundest sleep?¹⁷

Desires

Desires of man leads to fears in man. and these fears Lucretius explains are unfounded. Illustrating this he explains that it is man himself who had made his life hell on earth. The mythical fears of afterlife therefore are explained away by Lucretius.

"As for those torments that are said to take place in the depths of hell, they are actually present here and now, in our own lives.

1. The myth of Tantalus - terror at the huge boulder poised above him in the air. In this life there really are mortals oppressed by unfounded fear of the gods and trembling at the impending doom that may fall upon any of them at the whim of chance.
2. Tityos - in hell, forever probed by birds of prey. Tityos is here in our midst - that poor devil prostrated by love, torn indeed by birds of prey, devoured by gnawing jealousy or rent by the fangs of some other passion.
3. Sisyphus - pushing a boulder laboriously up a steep hill, only to see it, once the top is reached, rolling and bounding down again. This is described as ambition, embittered by perpetual defeat.
4. 'Maidens in the flower of life' forever pouring water into a leaking vessel - compared to ever feeding a malcontent mind, filling it with good things but never satisfying it.¹⁸

'Life is darkened by the fear of retribution for our misdeeds Even though these horrors are not physically present, yet the conscience ridden mind in terrified anticipation torments itself with its own goads and whips.'¹⁹

Cause of fear therefore would be lust for life.

'Men feel plainly enough within their minds, a heavy burden, whose weight depresses them. If only they perceived with equal clearness the causes of this depression... they would not lead such a life as we now see all too commonly - no one knowing what he really wants and every one for ever trying to get away from where he is, as though mere locomotion could throw off the load.'²⁰

'Found aching hearts in every home, racked incessantly by pangs the mind was powerless to assuage and forced to vent themselves in recalcitrant repining. He concluded that the source of this illness was the container itself ---- it was cracked and leaky, so that it could never by any possibility filled; partly because he saw it taint whatever it took in with the taste of its own foulness.'²¹

Life of man is also plagued by desires and fears aroused by **Love and Lust**. But can this be explained away that easily through philosophy or logical argument? Lucretious uses his 'honeyed' words to make man drink this bitter drought.

It is in this manner he explains 'love' that man holds so sacred. He is bold in his language and thought as the occasion requires it.

'The wounded normally fall in direction of their wound. The blood spurts out towards the source of the blow; and the enemy who delivered it, ... so when a man is pierced by the shafts of Venus, he strives towards the source of the wound and craves to be united with it and to transmit something of his own substance from body to body. This, then, is what we term Venus. This is the origin of the thing called Love - that drop of Venus's; honey that first drips into our heart, to be followed by numbing heart ache.'²²

He call this budding shoots of madness.²³

'In love there is the hope that the flame of passion may be quenched by the same body that kindled it. But this runs clean counter to the course of nature. This is the one thing of which the more we have, the more our breast burns with the evil lust of having a pretty face or a pleasing complexion given the body nothing to enjoy but insubstantial images, which all too often fond hope scatters to the winds.'²⁴

'Venus teases lovers with images. They cannot glut their eyes by gazing on the beloved form, however closely. Their hands glean nothing from those dainty limbs in their aimless roving over all the body. Then comes the moment when limbs entwined they pluck the flower of youth. Their bodies thrill with the presentiment of joy and it is seed-time in the fields of Venus.... One can glean nothing from the other, nor enter in and be wholly absorbed, body in body; for sometimes it seems that that is what they are craving and striving to do ... At length, when the spate of lust is spent, there comes a slight intermission in the raging fever. But not for long. Soon the same frenzy returns. The fit is upon them once more.'²⁵

The negative effects of love are listed by the poet. They are

1. The Lovers spend their strength and they fail under the strength.
2. Their days are spent at the mercy of another's whim.
3. As a result wealth slips from them.
4. Neglect of duties.
5. Reputation totters.

Therefore, from the very heart of the fountain of delight there rises a jet of bitterness that poisons the fragrance of the flowers.²⁶

It is not that nature denies pleasures to man.

It is just that the senseless striving after luxury is futile.

'Nature does not miss these luxuries when men recline in company on the soft grass by a running stream under the branches of a tall tree and refresh their bodies pleasurably at small expence.'²⁷

'Burning fevers flee no swifter from your body if you toss under figured counterpanes and coverlets of crimson than if you lie in rude home spun.'¹²⁸

Right kind of prayer

Lucretius does recommend a right kind of prayer.

'This is not piety, this off repeated show of bowing a veiled head before a graven image; this bustling to every altar; this how-towing and prostration on the ground with palms outspread before the shrines of the gods; this deluging of alters with the blood of beasts; this heaping of vow on vow. True piety lies rather in the power to contemplate the universe with a quiet mind.'¹²⁹

'If a man would guide his life by true philosophy, he will find ample riches in a modest livelihood enjoyed with tranquil mind.'¹³⁰

The best wish one should wish for should be peace of mind devoid of passion, desire, ambition and fear.

Not only peace of mind, but peace for one's country as well. For this, he resorts to traditional Myth.

'Grant that this brutal business of war by sea and land may everywhere be lulled to rest. For you alone have power to bestow on mortals the blessing of quiet peace. In your bosom Mars himself, supreme commander in this brutal business, flings himself down at times, laid low by the irremediable wound of love. as he lies outstretched his breath hangs upon your lips. Stoop, then, goddess most glorious, and enfold him at rest in your hallowed bosom and whisper with those lips sweet words of prayer, beseeching for the people of Rome untroubled peace.'¹³¹

It is only Love that could tame strife.

Juvenal (55-140AD)

Juvenal was a Roman poet who had written satirical sketches. Although not much is known to us about his personal life it is believed that he was probably born in A.D. 55 and died in AD 140. The sixteen satires we have of him are bitter and forceful verses. He does not according to many, present us a coherent ethical code but exposes us to photographic individual portraits. In fact, he forces us, through his artistic and indignant outcome to look at them. According to his own words

'All human endeavours, men's prayers,

Fears, angers, pleasures, joys and pursuits, these make

The mixed mash of my verse.'¹³²

However on closer examination of his works one cannot but notice the distinct prayers and wishes of mankind, along with their results often focused by Juvenal. But Juvenal does claim that he had taken to writing because he was compelled to. Compelled by the human situation itself.

'Though talent be wanting, yet
Indignation will drive me to verse.'³³

For it is,
'misplaced kindness
To refrain from writing.'³⁴

'It is harder not to be writing satires; for who
Could endure this monstrous city, however callous at heart,
And swallow his wrath?'³⁵

There is no doubt that Juvenal attributes the deterioration of the situation to the desires and prayers of man.

'Search every land, from Cadiz to the dawn steaked shores
Of Ganges, and you'll find few men who can distinguish
A false from a worthwhile objective, or slash their way through
The fogs of deception. since when were our fears and desires
Ever dictated by reason?

What project goes so smoothly
That you never regret the idea, let alone its realisation?
What you ask for you get. The gods aren't fussy, they're
Willing
To blast you, root and branch, on request.'³⁶

Accordingly Juvenal lists us, with examples the prayers of man and of course the dangers that often accompany them.

Wealth

'The most popular, urgent prayer, well known in every temple
Is for wealth, Increase my holdings, please make my deposit account
The largest in town.'³⁷

'More are strangulated

By the capital they amass with such expense of spirit,

Those bloated fortunes that dwarf any normal inheritance

Till they look like some punny dolphin beside a British whale.¹³⁸

'Some are so blind with greed that they live for their fortunes

Rather than making their fortunes enhance their lives.¹³⁹

The danger of greed is that,

'the appetite for riches will expand in direct proportion

To your actual wealth: small fortunes breed less insistent desires.¹⁴⁰

There's one

Path, and one only, to a life of peace - through virtue.

Fortune has no divinity, could we but see it: it's we,

We ourselves, who make her a goddess, and set her in the heavens.⁴¹

The danger of greed is that a person would resort to any method in order to fulfill his desires.
He would not even hesitate to sell his own wife to achieve it.

'pimp of a husband

Takes gifts from his own wife's lover-if she is barred in law

From inheriting legacies - and while they paw each other

Tactfully stares at the ceiling, or snores, wide awake in his wine?¹⁴²

People cease to work for honour. Even Athletes.

'Where does athletic prestige

Get you in terms of cash? Can you eat an olive wreath?⁴³

For,

'.. The stink of profit is pleasant

Whatever it's source....

... No question about the source

Of your wealth - but wealth you must have.⁴⁴

Juvenal also warns us that wealth is also a source of fear.

'When you go on a journey,

Though you may have only a few small treasures with you

You'll take every stirring shadow, each moonlit reed

For a sword or a cudgel; But the empty handed

Traveller whistles his way past any highwaymen.¹⁴⁵

Wealth attracts unnecessary dangers. And it is something that you could lose quite easily. Therefore the satisfaction you would gain out of wealth would be of an impermanent nature.

'Seneca - grown too wealthy-

Lost his magnificent gardens, storm-troopers besieged

Lateranu's ancestral mansion. Garrets are very seldom

The object of military raids.¹⁴⁶

Power

The other greed that man fosters is the lust for power, he takes examples from life itself, to make his arguments more convincing as well as appealing.

Sejanus

Had no idea what to pray for. His interminable pursuit

Of excessive wealth and honours built up towering

Edifice, storey by storey, so that his final downfall

was that degree greater, the crash more catastrophic.¹⁴⁷

One should not let power get into their heads. For one must remember that power too does not last. One may be powerful and be popular at one moment. But he may also lose all the next.

'Some men are overthrown by the envy their great power

Arouses; it's long and illustrious list of honours

That sinks them. The ropes are heaved, down come the statues,

Axes demolish their chariot wheels, the unoffending

Legs of their horses broken; and now the fire

Roars up in the furnace, new flames hiss under the bellows

The head of the peoples' darling glows red-hot, great Sejanus

Crackles and melts. That face only yesterday ranked 'Second in all the world. Now it's so much scrap material

To be turned into jugs and basins, frying pans, chamber pots.'⁴⁸

One also may pray for **eloquence** for this is a means to power. A good example of how prayers are conditioned by greed. It is not through virtue or truth that one strives to gain power. But by effective speech.

'Eloquence, that's what they're after, all of them: even the school boy

..Praying that one day he'll become

As good and successful a Cicero or Demosthenes. And yet

Both of these perished because of their eloquence, both

Were destroyed by their overflowing and copious talent

That talent alone cost Cicero his severed head and hand.'⁴⁹

'Violent too, was the end of Demosthenes, who held

All Athens spellbound with his torrential oratory'⁵⁰

One may win over the public by such foul methods but Juvenal warns of the trust vested on the public approval.

'And what

Of the commons? they follow fortunes as always, and detest

The victims, the failurestheir motto is 'Couldn't care less'.....

there's only two things that concern them:

Bread and Games.⁵¹

This is mainly due to the reason that the public tends to always think of the profit.

'...disloyal heads will roll.

'Come on, then, quickly, down to the river -

Boot Caesar's fore in the ribs while his corpse is still on show.¹⁵²

Military victory is another mode of gaining political power. But would that last? Would it turnout to be profitable? Juvenal takes examples from their own history.

'Take men like Pompey or Crassus - and that other tyrant

Who cowed Rome's citizens, brought them under the lash:

What proved their downfall? Lust for ultimate power

Pursued without scruple - and the malice of Heaven

That granted ambition's prayers. Battle and slaughter

See most kings off! few tyrants die in their beds.¹⁵³

Men strive over war trophies. Yet they forget the futility of the acquisitions. For one had to remember the mortality of humans. Nothing would be of value once you are dead.

'.. These are the prizes

For which every commander, Greek, barbarian, Roman,

Has always striven. For them he'll endure toil

And danger. The thirst for glory for outstrips the pursuit of virtue.⁵⁴

'Countries have come to ruin

Not once but many times, through the vain glory of a few

Who lusted for power, who wanted a title that would cling

To the stones set over their ashes though a barron
fig tree's strength will suffice to crack the stone asundar.¹⁵⁵

The following quotation seems to sum up his argument on power, popularity and politics.

'One globe seemd too small for the youthful Alexander.

.....Yet when he entered

Brick walled Babylon, a coffin was measure enough

To contain him. Death along reveals the puny

dimensions of our human frame.¹⁵⁶

Longevity

Longevity is the other popular prayer among humans. Juvenal examines the validity of the wish in no uncertain terms.

'Grant us a long life, Jupiter, O grant us many years! In the bloom of youth it's this which, pale with anxiety. You pray for⁵⁷

On discussing the results of old age Juvenal reminds us of what age does to one's looks.

He is quite outspoken and unmerciful in his onslaught of bringing home reality to the reader. thoughts unspoken by many through misplaced kindness.

'How unrelenting

Are longevity's ills!

Look first at your face, You'll see an ugly

And shapeless caricature of its former self:

... you resemble nothing so much

As some elderly female baboon in darker Africa:

Young men are all individuals: **A** will have better looks

Or brains than **B**, while **B** will beat A on muscle.

But old men look all alike.¹⁵⁸

And then how one's own body will begin to fail him.

'all share the same bald pate

Their noses all drip like an infant's, their voices tremble

As much as their limbs, ...

they become a burden

To their wives, their children, themselves.⁵⁹

Their taste buds are ruined, they get scant pleasure

From food or wine, sex lies in long oblivion -

Or if they try, it's hopeless, though they labour all night long

At that limp and shriveled object, limp it remains.

What can the future hold for these impotent dodderers?

Nothing very exciting.... desire outruns performance..

.. How can the deaf appreciate music?⁶⁰

The inevitable grief he will have to experience is also reminded.

...he'll have to bury his sons, he'll witness

His dear wife's end, and his brother's, he'll see the urns

Filled with his sister's ashes. Such are the penalties

if you live to a ripe old age - perpetual grief.⁶¹

Physical Beauty is another popular prayer. Of this, Juvenal's view is that beauty could be a source of sin - something that may attract the unwanted. It is due to the ignorance or the wrong kind of thinking that one prays for something so superficial.

A handsome

Son keeps his wretched parents in constant anxiety:

Good looks and decent behaviour too seldom are found

In the same person.⁶²

So you're proud of your handsome son? Fair enough but don't ever forget

The extra hazards that face him. He'll become a notorious

Layer of other men's wives, always scared that some husband's

Hot on his tail for revenge.⁶³

'May be the first time your dream boy goes with married women

he'll really love her

.... it won't be long before

He's become the perfect gigolo.⁶⁴ (X. 319)

Connection between Sin and Fear

According to Juvenal fear in the minds of man is mostly due to his guilty conscience. Guilty conscience is due to crime. And finally crimes are committed because of greed. To achieve the wrong kinds of prayers in him in any possible way he can. Sin would be followed by inevitable punishment, even if no one knew about the deed. One's own integrity would be enough to cause him uneasiness and fear.

Their guilty conscience keeps them

In a lather fear; the mind's

it's own torturer,

Lays on with invisible whips, silently flays them alive.

Its fearful retribution more cruel'..

To be stuck, day and night, with this hostile

Witness in one's own breast.⁶⁵

One need not commit the crime itself. Mere contemplation of sin would be enough to bring it's painful results.

'Such are the penalties that the mere intention of sinning
Is liable to incur. He who secretly meditates crime is
As guilty as if he's committed the offence he plans.'¹⁶⁶

As a result he has no no hunger, throat is fever dry, food chokes; He gets little sleep and when he sleeps he gets nightmares. Fear illness and all misfortunes are attributed to the result of his sin. Even natural phenomena, rain, storm invokes fear.

All this is a result of the conditioning of the mind. To fall into the habit of crime is something that one would find extremely difficult to get over.

'they are bold enough in action' it's afterwards, when the crime's
Accomplished, that notions of right and wrong begin to
Assail their minds. But soon
they're back to the same old tricks
they can't change their nature.'¹⁶⁷

Solution - right kind of prayer

If our current petitions are pointless - destructive even -

What should we ask for, what message leave on the knees of the Gods?⁶⁸ (X. 51)

Juvenal also seems to recognize the necessity for man to pray for something. His habit of asking favours from a supernatural force. Yet the prayers are echoes of the greed's and desires of man.

'Is there nothing worth praying for, then? If you want my advice,
Let the Gods themselves determine, what's most appropriate
For mankind, and what best suits our various circumstances.
They'll give us the things we need, not those we want.'¹⁶⁹

'... if you must have something to pray for, if you
Insist on offering up the entyrails and consecrated
Sausages from a white pig ling in every shrine, then ask
for a sound mind in a sound body, a valiant heart
Without fear of death that reckons longevity
The least among Nature's gifts, that's strong to endure
All kinds of toil, that's untainted by lust and anger.'⁷⁰

But how could man condition his mind to conceive right kind of prayer? This could be done only by a proper understanding. The answer is philosophy.

'Philosophy, by degrees, peels away our follies and most
Of our vices, gives us a grounding in right and wrong.'⁷¹

Juvenal also appeals for peace of mind, but he is also similar to Lucretius who in his Epicurian philosophy prays for peace among mankind. This he expresses quite forcefully in no uncertain terms.

'But today even snakes agree better than men. Wild beasts
Spare their own species: when did the stronger lion
Ever strike down the weaker? And was there ever a forest
In which some boar was slain by a bigger boar's tushes?
The savage Indian tigress dwells in unbroken peace
With her fellow - tigresses: surely
bears, too agree with their kind.
But man is a different matter.'⁷²

Both Lucretius and Juvenal appeal to the intellect - the minds of the individual reader. Though they have used different modes of address and presentation it is literature they have manipulated as their vehicles of communication. This proves that both of them not only agree to a great extent on the causes of fears and prayers of man, their results etc, but they are of one mind regarding the effect of literature. Literature as a powerful mode of mass communication, where one is able to address the minds through shock treatment if not exactly through their hearts or finer sentiments.

1 Lucretius, On the Nature of The Universe, Bk. I. 947
2 Ibid. Bk. I.72
3 Ibid. Bk. I.144
4 Ibid. Bk. I.935
5 Ibid. Bk. II.35
6 Ibid. Bk. V.1425
7 Ibid. Bk. II.82
8 Ibid. Bk. II.16
9 Ibid. Bk. II.52
10 Ibid. Bk. V.1118
11 Ibid. Bk. V.1127
12 Ibid. Bk. III.76
13 Ibid. Bk. III.85
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