

# Episode 195 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 05

Post by "Cassius" of October 11, 2023 at 7:55 AM

Underlining added by me:

## Quote

18.3.17 - Once again, living a life free of disturbance is not just a matter of staying alive and not being disturbed, as with a person under heavy sedation, but living the sort of life specific to the being in question. Epicurus could concede to Plato that there are states of living things which are neither pleasant nor painful, as for instance, states of unconsciousness, but he would not concede to the subtlers of the [Philebus](#) that once the process of coming-to-be had finished the pleasure was over. Faced with the problem which it was suggested faced Plato after the Republic (cf. 6.8) Epicurus refused to make a choice. Granted we have a conscious living thing, then he seems to have thought, if it is living its specific form of life that life will be pleasant except to the extent that the proper balance is disturbed. In pleasures of restoration the condition of the organism is not entirely disrupted. To the extent that it approximates to proper balance there will be pleasure, (for to that extent some of the imbalance will have been removed and some balance restored), but the pleasure will be perfect only when the balance is. Having a physicalist view of the constitution of man he will be very inclined to some view of the good state as consisting in a physical balance of the organism, but he has no inclination to follow Plato or Aristotle in their views of the exquisite pleasure of philosophy. There is nothing special about the mind in this respect and indeed, un-Platonically, its main value is not in the divine glory of the intellect, nor its special pleasantness, but in its contribution to the general stability of the system. In some ways this has an Aristotelian ring: if one is living according to one's nature then one is enjoying one's life, and failure of enjoyment is a function of disrupted nature. But Epicurus' physicalism makes him stick firmly by physical balance, and this in turn makes him less interested in individual activities and their enjoyments, which gets Aristotle embroiled with external goods (cf. 13.4.3-4), and more in a condition of the individual which ensures him balance independently of external circumstance.