

Episode 196 - The Epicurean Arguments In Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 06

Post by "Cassius" of October 14, 2023 at 10:15 AM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

if 6 held that "Any non-painful feeling is a pleasure" it would be a deductive conclusion of 1 and 2.

Good point. Will change most every word "experience" to "feeling." That also will address the points in the remainder of your post I think.....

While I think in normal discussion the word "experience" equates to "feeling," there is no reason to introduce that ambiguity in this list of points. All that was previously stated as "experience" will now be changed to "feeling."

While [we know that the position that there are only two feelings and we are experiencing either one or the other is the Epicurean position](#), for persuasiveness purposes we will still need to hammer the point that Kalosyni is wanting to raise: *Can we experience something without an associated feeling?*

Cicero says we can, Torquatus/Epicurus says we cannot. As far as I can tell, every single reference to the question in the core texts backs up Torquatus/Epicurus that this is the Epicurean position.

Now as to WHY that is the Epicurean position, that's a separate but highly important question. I would say it is because of Epicurus' philosophic conclusions about life (life is desirable, so life in the absence of pain is pleasurable) but there are probably other ways of reaching the same conclusion. It is a plus (but not determinative of the question) that modern clinical researchers seem to take the same position (a point which Don and Godfrey are all over.) See posts in [this](#) subforum and many others which are not linked there as of yet.

One additional point on this from the letter to Menoecus: "And therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not because it adds to it an infinite span of time, but because it takes away the craving for immortality."

I have not previously interpreted it this way, but that underlined portion may be exactly the point: *it is the right understanding that death is nothing to us that makes a mortal life enjoyable*. It is thinking through these issues philosophically that makes us realize that even when we are not being stimulated, the simple and normal act of living is understood to be pleasurable. If we don't understand this, then we wander in indifference and doubt and question the value of life and we flirt with Stoicism or Nihilism or worse. If we do understand it,

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then the wise man can experience a constant predominance of pleasure over pain.