

Discussion of New Substack Article: "A Gate To Be Burst: Absence of Pain"

Post by "Cassius" of February 12, 2024 at 9:49 AM

Both of these last comments by Kalosyni show to me how much there is to think through on these questions:

1 - *We* might consider that Cicero's choice of Torquatus as spokesman undermines Epicurus, but I would say that would mainly come from the preexisting mindset that we have, based on years of commentators drumming on "absence of pain" without explaining it the way Torquatus did. In the modern world they have created a drumbeat that Epicurus must have been a neoBuddhist, and anyone who says so is wrong -- even if the person who says so was taught by Epicurean teachers, had many Epicurean friends, was writing to a significantly Epicurean audience, and had a greater command of the source materials of Greek philosophy than we today will ever hope to have. Cicero likely felt just the opposite - that by using Torquatus as spokesman he was granting to Epicurean philosophy a vigor that he did not think that it had. These attitudes are a problem that can't be worked through overnight, and getting to the appreciation of how much Cicero knew in relation to how much we know takes a strong dose of humility.

2 - Many of these phrases have multiple meanings from multiple perspectives. What is stated here in (2) could be one of them, especially if you're stuck in a rut from failing to have properly understood and implemented Epicurean philosophy in the past. But if you've failed to the point where you are at such a point of desperation, you probably better question whether your latest insight is any better than the failed insights that got you where you are. Sometimes when you have dug yourself into a ditch of asceticism, the first thing to do might be to stop digging rather than seek justification for what you've already dug!