

Episode 217 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 24 - Does Luck Control Whether An Epicurean Is Happy?

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Welcome to Episode 217 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the most complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world. Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at EpicureanFriends.com, where you will find a discussion thread for each of our podcast episodes and many other topics.

This week we continue our discussion of Book Two of Cicero's On Ends, which is largely devoted Cicero's attack on Epicurean Philosophy. Going through this book gives us the opportunity to review those attacks, take them apart, and respond to them as an ancient Epicurean might have done, and much more fully than Cicero allowed Torquatus, his Epicurean spokesman, to do.

Follow along with us here: [Cicero's On Ends - Complete Reid Edition](#). Check any typos or other questions against the original PDF which can be found [here](#).

Last week we focused on why Epicurus said that time does not make pleasure better. This week pick up further along in Section XXVII, where Cicero charges Epicurus with inconsistency in saying that pleasure is the root of happiness, when pleasure requires things external to us which are subject to fortune and not under our own control.

REID EDITION

XXVII

Oh, but our philosopher is subject to pain as well. Yes, but he sets it at nought; for he says that, if he were being roasted, he would call out how sweet this is! In what respect then is he inferior to the god, if not in respect of eternity? And what good does eternity bring but the highest form of pleasure, and that prolonged for ever? What boots it then to use high sounding language unless your language be consistent? On bodily pleasure (I will add mental, if you like, on the understanding that it also springs, as you believe, from the body) depends the life of happiness. Well, who can guarantee the wise man that this pleasure will be permanent? For the circumstances that give rise to pleasures are not within the control of the wise man, since your happiness is not dependent on wisdom herself, but on the objects which wisdom procures with a view to pleasure. Now all such objects are external to us, and what is external is in the power of chance. Thus fortune becomes lady paramount over happiness, though Epicurus says she to a small extent only crosses the path of the wise man.

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