

Epicurean Attitudes Toward Emotion

Post by "Don" of March 11, 2020 at 12:08 AM

[Quote from Elli](#)

Another example is here : «**Κενός** εκείνου φιλοσόφου λόγος, ὕφ' οὗ μηδέν πάθος ἀνθρώπου θεραπεύεται· ὥσπερ γάρ ἰατρικῆς οὐδεν ὄφελος μή τὰς νόσους τῶν σωμάτων ἐκβαλλούσης, οὕτως οὐδέ φιλοσοφίας, εἰ μή τό τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκβάλλει πάθος».

"A philosopher's words are empty (or vain) **if they do not heal the suffering of man**. For just as medicine is useless if it does not remove sickness from the body, so philosophy is useless if it does not remove suffering from the soul". (Emphasis added)

I think [Elli](#) and [Cassius](#) 's points here perfectly illustrate the Epicurean relative perspective. Something isn't "empty" or "vain" in an absolute sense. There are no Platonic "empty desires" for example. It is the results of something by which something is judged empty or not:

Which words of the Philosopher are empty?

Those that do not heal the suffering of man.

Thank you, [Elli](#) for spelling this out initially above!

[Elli](#) , am I correct in understanding that here:

ὥσπερ γάρ ἰατρικῆς **οὐδεν** ὄφελος μή τὰς νόσους τῶν σωμάτων ἐκβαλλούσης, οὕτως **οὐδέ** φιλοσοφίας, εἰ μή τό τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκβάλλει πάθος»

that **οὐδεν** means something like "nothing/no/none" so those lines could be translated something like:

"... For just as medicine **means nothing (has no benefit (ὄφελος))** if it does not remove sickness from the body, so philosophy **means nothing** if it does not remove suffering from the soul".

I'm asking because the juxtaposition of both **empty** and **nothing/no/none** seems possibly significant to me.