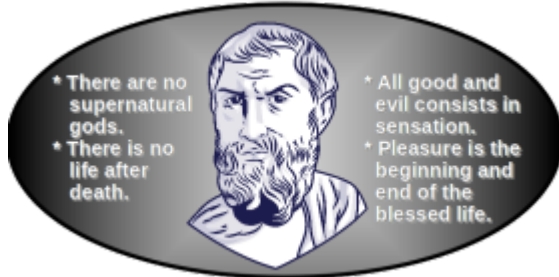


Four Hyper-Relevant Assertions of Epicurus (Citations From The Epicurean Texts)

Post by "Cassius" of February 25, 2021 at 6:49 AM



The purpose of this thread will be to accumulate text citations in support of four key assertions of Epicurean philosophy. This first post will contain a table of the assertions with passages from the texts supporting each assertion. We should include here citations primarily from Epicurus (Diogenes Laertius) and Lucretius, but other credible sources such as

Dlogenes of Oinoanda and the Epicurean material from Cicero are also prime targets for finding good material. Please add suggestions in this thread and we can update the table as they come in.

A table format would be preferable, but that isn't easily viewable on a telephone, so this post starts with an "outline" format, followed by the table at the bottom of the post:

1. There Are No Supernatural Gods

1. **Epicurus Letter to Menoeceus:** "First of all believe that god is a being immortal and blessed, even as the common idea of a god is engraved on men's minds, and do not assign to him anything alien to his immortality or ill-suited to his blessedness: but believe about him everything that can uphold his blessedness and immortality. For gods there are, since the knowledge of them is by clear vision. But they are not such as the many believe them to be: for indeed they do not consistently represent them as they believe them to be. And the impious man is not he who popularly denies the gods of the many, but he who attaches to the gods the beliefs of the many. For the statements of the many about the gods are not conceptions derived from sensation, but false suppositions, according to which the greatest misfortunes befall the wicked and the greatest blessings (the good) by the gift of the gods. For men being accustomed always to their own virtues welcome those like themselves, but regard all that is not of their nature as alien.
2. PD1. The blessed and immortal nature knows no trouble itself, nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favor. For all such things exist only in the weak.

2. There Is No Life After Death

1. **Epicurus Letter to Menoecus:** Become accustomed to the belief that [death is nothing to us](#). For all good and evil consists in sensation, but death is deprivation of sensation. 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. For there is nothing terrible in life for the man who has truly comprehended that there is nothing terrible in not living. So that the man speaks but idly who says that he fears death not because it will be painful when it comes, but because it is painful in anticipation. For that which gives no trouble when it comes is but an empty pain in anticipation. So death, the most terrifying of ills, is nothing to us, since so long as we exist, death is not with us; but when death comes, then we do not exist. It does not then concern either the living or the dead, since for the former it is not, and the latter are no more.
2. PD2. [Death is nothing to us](#), for that which is dissolved is without sensation; and that which lacks sensation is nothing to us.
3. **All Good and Evil Consists in Sensation (No Absolute Good / Evil / Virtue)**
 1. Epicurus Letter to Menoecus: Become accustomed to the belief that [death is nothing to us](#). For all good and evil consists in sensation...
 2. Epicurus Letter to Menoecus: For the virtues are by nature bound up with the pleasant life, and the pleasant life is inseparable from them.
 3. Diogenes of Oinoanda Fr. 32: If, gentlemen, the point at issue between these people and us involved inquiry into «what is the means of happiness?» and they wanted to say «the virtues» (which would actually be true), it would be unnecessary to take any other step than to agree with them about this, without more ado. But since, as I say, the issue is not «what is the means of happiness?» but «what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?», I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life, while the virtues, which are inopportunately messed about by these people (being transferred from the place of the means to that of the end), are in no way an end, but the means to the end. Let us therefore now state that this is true, making it our starting-point. Suppose, then, someone were to ask someone, though it is a naive question, «who is it whom these virtues benefit?», obviously the answer will be «man.» The virtues certainly do not make provision for these birds flying past, enabling them to fly well, or for each of the other animals: they do not desert the nature with which they live and by which they have been engendered; rather it is for the sake of this nature that the virtues do everything and exist.
 4. PD5. It is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently, honorably, and justly, [nor again to live a life of prudence, honor, and justice] without living pleasantly. And the man who does not possess the pleasant life is not living prudently, honorably, and justly, [and the man who does not possess the virtuous life] cannot possibly live pleasantly.
 5. [PD10](#). If the things that produce the pleasures of profligates could dispel the fears of the mind about the phenomena of the sky, and death, and its pains, and also

teach the limits of desires (and of pains), we should never have cause to blame them: for they would be filling themselves full, with pleasures from every source, and never have pain of body or mind, which is the evil of life.

6. PD 33. Justice never is anything in itself, but in the dealings of men with one another, in any place whatever, and at any time, it is a kind of compact not to harm or be harmed. 34. Injustice is not an evil in itself, but only in consequence of the fear which attaches to the apprehension of being unable to escape those appointed to punish such actions. 36. In its general aspect, justice is the same for all, for it is a kind of mutual advantage in the dealings of men with one another; but with reference to the individual peculiarities of a country, or any other circumstances, the same thing does not turn out to be just for all. 37. Among actions which are sanctioned as just by law, that which is proved, on examination, to be of advantage, in the requirements of men's dealings with one another, has the guarantee of justice, whether it is the same for all or not. But if a man makes a law, and it does not turn out to lead to advantage in men's dealings with each other, then it no longer has the essential nature of justice. And even if the advantage in the matter of justice shifts from one side to the other, but for a while accords with the general concept, it is nonetheless just for that period, in the eyes of those who do not confound themselves with empty sounds, but look to the actual facts. 38. Where, provided the circumstances have not been altered, actions which were considered just have been shown not to accord with the general concept, in actual practice, then they are not just. But where, when circumstances have changed, the same actions which were sanctioned as just no longer lead to advantage, they were just at the time, when they were of advantage for the dealings of fellow-citizens with one another, but subsequently they are no longer just, when no longer of advantage

4. **Pleasure Is the Beginning And End of the Blessed Life**

1. Epicurus Letter to Menoeceus: And for this cause we call pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life. For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good. And since pleasure is the first good and natural to us, for this very reason we do not choose every pleasure, but sometimes we pass over many pleasures, when greater discomfort accrues to us as the result of them: and similarly we think many pains better than pleasures, since a greater pleasure comes to us when we have endured pains for a long time. Every pleasure then because of its natural kinship to us is good, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen: even as every pain also is an evil, yet not all are always of a nature to be avoided. Yet by a scale of comparison and by the consideration of advantages and disadvantages we must form our judgment on all these matters. For the good on certain occasions we treat as bad, and conversely the bad as good.
2. PD3. The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of mind,

nor of both at once. (A refutation of Plato's argument in [Philebus](#) that pleasure is not the greatest good because pleasure allegedly has no limit.)

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<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1896-four-hyper-relativist-starting-point-of-epicurus-citations-from-the-epicurean-texts/?postID=11130#post11130>

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