

Episode Ninety-Six - The Proof That Pleasure (And Not Virtue) Is the Supreme Good

Post by "Cassius" of November 20, 2021 at 10:02 PM

In tonight's 20th discussion Martin brought up the latest version of this continuing question, which was posted to the Facebook thread for Episode 95. Those of you who weren't on our 20th discussion were spared my rant on the subject, but there's one part of it I want to repeat and reassure you about: No matter how long you are involved in discussion of Epicurean philosophy, this position is going to be thrown in your face, so it is imperative that you develop a response and be prepared to deal with it.

Our episode of course was devoted to explaining the Epicurean position, through Torquatus, that pleasure is the highest good. Whenever that point is made, you can be sure that assorted stoics and neo-stoics are going to come out of the woodwork to point out that "Yes, Epicurus said pleasure was the highest good, but what he also said was that the highest pleasure was tranquility, and that's not a form of sensual pleasure at all but something that transcends the senses!"

Here it is once again, followed (logically enough) by a debate among Stoic-minded people about their own viewpoints:

epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/2381/

My answer to this question is set out in the discussion presented at this link, and at many other places on this forum: [The Full Cup / Fullness of Pleasure Model](#)

But simply posting a link doesn't begin to equip us to address the question. In our 20th discussion, Godfrey and Joshua suggested several different perspectives that need to be considered (one of which is "Who was Menoeceus and how advanced a student was he?" (so that we understand how Epicurus would have tailored his message).

Then there are observations about PD3 (which is very close to the section of the letter to Menoeceus about absence of pain, but which differs in significant respects.

There is an entire series of arguments to be made in addition to those I make about the [Philebus](#) context in the article I linked above.

But for now I would be appreciative to any who would like to extend this thread: How would YOU answer Mr. Daly's question in a way that makes plain how to reconcile the many clear statements about pleasurable sensations made by Epicurus with the argument that Epicurus then (they argue) reversed course and said that the highest pleasure was not a sensual experience at all?

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2249-episode-ninety-six-the-proof-that-pleasure-and-not-virtue-is-the-supreme-good/?postID=14722#post14722>