

Why Tranquility Should Not Be the Main Goal for an Epicurean

Post by "Cassius" of December 1, 2021 at 4:53 AM

To put it positively, then, Epicurean tranquillity is a state of contentment and inner calm that arises from the thought that one has or can easily get all that one needs, and has no reason to be afraid of anything in the future.

Epicurus did claim that the happy person will always enjoy tranquillity, but he did not claim that nothing could disturb him: one will mourn the death of a friend, for example, but since such grief can be overcome or outweighed by pleasant thoughts and memories, including grateful remembrances of the past joys of friendship, peace of mind will generally prevail. A wise man is touched but briefly by fortune's whim;¹³ he will feel some troubles, but he will never be radically thrown off balance.

I agree with this too, but due to the damnable Stoic/religious influences that are so widespread today, I think in most contexts when you can make the statement underlined in red you should go further and clarify that Epicurus did not think you reach that state through mind games (like the Stoics) but through the aggressive and vigorous study of nature and the taking of all actions that are possible to create and maintain your state of pleasurable living in the real world.

As Joshua said in the current podcast, or as Raymond Massey character says at the end of the "Things to Come" scene, the work of getting your life in order philosophically is not the end of the process, but only the beginning. Yes philosophy itself is pleasurable, but once you have your philosophical life in order you aren't finished, you're only beginning. Then and only then are you prepared and equipped to go out into the world and do what needs to be done to obtain and secure your pleasant life.