

Episode One Hundred Thirty-Seven - The Letter to Menoecus 04 - On Death (Part Two)

Post by "Kalosyni" of August 29, 2022 at 8:30 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

For both and everyone this episode is a good way to focus on the answer to the question: When you and Epicurus both accept that you have been nonexistent for an eternity before birth and will be nonexistent for an eternity after you die, do you really think that Epicurus taught that the full description of all you want out of life is to be "calm?"

As I read this: "**You have been nonexistent for an eternity before birth and will be nonexistent for an eternity after you die**" -- it had a rather sobering affect on me -- and a feeling that I needed to sit down to make sense of it. Which points to the possibility that I don't really understand my mortality. It seems then that the next impulse is to then fully understand what it is to be alive, and that must be done through the senses and through experiencing the world. So that would be fully opening up one's awareness and one's senses -- which is a bit of a frightening thing, because if you open your awareness then you are confronted by everything -- both pleasure and pain!

VS 11 - "For most people, to be quiet is to be numb and to be active is to be frenzied."

I think this is a very important Epicurean principle to consider -- that we are going to navigate through the world neither numb, nor frenzied -- and maybe a better word than "calm" would be "grounded" (?)

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Pleasure as defined by normal definitions includes both joy and delight and tranquility. The reverse is not the case in normal or academic discourse - tranquility is not considered to include joy and delight.

As I see it if we want to convey that we value both goals in the online world of discussing Epicurus, the global word which must be emphasized is Pleasure. If we fail to make clear the sweeping definition of Pleasure, the result is that we imply that Tranquility is a separate and equal or even higher goal. At that point we will be indistinguishable from those who consider joy and delight to be second tier goals and that joy and delight are expendable or merely instrumental toward some supposedly

higher word.

Thank you Cassius for your continued explanations and to not let us slip down into something that will be misinterpreted and lead back down to an incorrect interpretation. Word choice is everything it seems, and I see how this will continue to be an issue unless we get creative and write out some modern "principle doctrines" -- pithy ways of explaining core truths of Epicureanism. I myself like the phrase: "sweet life" because of the implications that it includes pleasurable sensations. But a full pithy saying is needed, and maybe more than just one pithy saying to better explain things.