

Five Doses That Trump Four Every Time - The "Five-Part Cure"

Post by "Cassius" of February 9, 2023 at 7:35 PM

When we reviewed this material in the podcast, we chose the REID translation because it seemed more literal than Rackham. Here is Reid's version of this same passage:

[40] XII. Again, the truth that pleasure is the supreme good can be most easily apprehended from the following consideration. Let us imagine an individual in the enjoyment of pleasures great, numerous and constant, both mental and bodily, with no pain to thwart or threaten them; I ask what circumstances can we describe as more excellent than these or more desirable? A man whose circumstances are such must needs possess, as well as other things, a robust mind subject to no fear of death or pain, because death is apart from sensation, and pain when lasting is usually slight, when oppressive is of short duration, so that its temporariness reconciles us to its intensity, and its slightness to its continuance. [41] When in addition we suppose that such a man is in no awe of the influence of the gods, and does not allow his past pleasures to slip away, but takes delight in constantly recalling them, what circumstance is it possible to add to these, to make his condition better?

So going by this one the description of the best life is "the enjoyment of pleasures great, numerous and constant, both mental and bodily, with no pain to thwart or threaten them. "

Comparing that to Rackham (The truth of the position that pleasure is the ultimate good will most readily appear from the following illustration. Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain:) and looking back at the Latin, it appears that the "undisturbed" has crept into Rackham without good justification. I think we can all speculate as to why he would be tempted to use that term even though it is not in the text.

It's pretty easy to read "impede" in the sense of delay (or thwart) for as Reid does, plus the "impending" rings of "threaten" also per Reid, which agrees with my Cassell's Latin dictionary for Impendo. That rings well with the reference at the beginning of book 1 as Epicurus standing up against the threats of the gods and breaking the bars of the gates of nature.