

What Are The Possible Reasons (And Of These, The Most Likely) Why The List of 40 Principal Doctrines Does Not Feature A Statement Explicitly Stating Pleasure To Be The Goal of Life?

Post by "Don" of February 13, 2023 at 5:43 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Going back to the original question: What are the possible reasons why the list of 40 [Principal Doctrines](#) does not feature a statement explicitly stating pleasure to be the goal of life?

It is possible that there were more Doctrines than just 40? So that what we have from Diogenes Laertius is incomplete?

It looks to me that Diogenes Laertius lists two goals -- and this excerpt shows a conflict. On one hand there is "health of the body and tranquility of the mind" but further down "pleasure is the alpha and omega".

Letter from Menoeceus ([R.D Hicks](#)):

Quote

We must also reflect that of desires some are natural, others are groundless ; and that of the natural some are necessary as well as natural, and some natural only. And of the necessary desires some are necessary if we are to be happy, some if the body is to be rid of uneasiness, some if we are even to live.

[128]

He who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion toward **securing health of body and tranquillity of mind, seeing that this is the sum and end of a blessed life.** For the end of all our actions is to be free from pain and fear, and, when once we have attained all this, the tempest of the soul is laid ; seeing that the living creature has no need to go in search of something that is lacking, nor to look for anything else by which the good of the soul and of the body will be fulfilled. When we are pained because of the absence of pleasure, then, and then only, do we feel the need of

pleasure. **Wherefore we call pleasure the alpha and omega of a blessed life.**

[129]

Pleasure is our first and kindred good. It is the starting-point of every choice and of every aversion, and to it we come back, inasmuch as we make feeling the rule by which to judge of every good thing. And since pleasure is our first and native good,

for that reason we do not choose every pleasure whatsoever, but oftentimes pass over many pleasures when a greater annoyance ensues from them.

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For what it's worth, here are my verses 128-9 from that section of the letter to Menoikeus:

Quote

[128] The steady contemplation of these things equips one to know how to decide all choice and rejection for the health of the body and for the tranquility of the mind (<τῆς ψυχῆς> ἀταραξίαν ataraxia), that is for our physical and our mental existence, since this is the goal of a blessed life. For the sake of this, we do everything in order to neither be in bodily or mental pain nor to be in fear or dread; and so, when once this has come into being around us, it sets free all of the calamity, distress, and suffering of the mind, seeing that the living being has no need to go in search of something that is lacking for the good of our mental and physical existence. For it is then that we need pleasure, if we were to be in pain from the pleasure not being present; but if we were to not be in pain, we no longer desire or beg for pleasure. And this is why we say pleasure is the foundation and fulfillment of the blessed life. [129] Because we perceived pleasure as a fundamental good and common to our nature, and so, as a result of this, we begin every choice and rejection against this, judging every good thing by the standard of how that pleasure affects us or how we react to considering experiencing that pleasure. And because pleasure is the fundamental and inborn good, this is why not every pleasure is seized and we pass by many pleasures when greater unpleasant things were to result for us as a result: and we think many pains better than pleasures whenever greater pleasure were to follow for a longer time by patiently abiding the pain.