

On Ends Torquatus Section Discussion

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 25, 2023 at 2:33 PM

Highlight 3: The best pleasures can occur with the simultaneous removal of pain, and this an important aspect of pleasure often overlooked because most people focus on the simple pleasures of sensual enjoyment (taste, smell, sight, sound, touch).

From section 37:

For the pleasure which we pursue is not that alone which excites the natural constitution itself by a kind of sweetness, and of which the sensual enjoyment is attended by a kind of agreeableness, but we look upon the greatest pleasure as that which is enjoyed when all pain is removed. Now inasmuch as whenever we are released from pain, we rejoice in the mere emancipation and freedom from all annoyance, and everything whereat we rejoice is equivalent to pleasure, just as everything whereat we are troubled is equivalent to pain, therefore the complete release from pain is rightly termed pleasure. For just as the mere removal of annoyance brings with it the realization of pleasure, whenever hunger and thirst have been banished by food and drink, so pain is removed. For just as the mere removal of annoyance brings with it the realization of pleasure, whenever hunger and thirst have been banished by food and drink, so in every case the banishment of pain ensures its replacement by pleasure.

[38] Therefore Epicurus refused to allow that there is any middle term between pain and pleasure; what was thought by some to be a middle term, the absence of all pain, was not only itself pleasure, but the highest pleasure possible. Surely any one who is conscious of his own condition must needs be either in a state of pleasure or in a state of pain. Epicurus thinks that the highest degree of pleasure is defined by the removal of all pain, so that pleasure may afterwards exhibit diversities and differences but is incapable of increase or extension.

Consider for contemplation:

- 1) your experience between eating a warm, just-out-of-the-oven slice of your favorite kind of pizza when you are hungry vs. when you are not really hungry.
- 2) your experience of eating when you are hungry and eating just the right number of slices of pizza to feel no longer hungry (and comfortably full) vs. eating several slices too many (eating past the point of fullness and then feeling the pain of your over-full belly).
- 3) the removal of your hunger by eating the right amount is more pleasurable than eating too much.