

# Episode 177 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 29

## - Chapter 12 - The New Hedonism 06

**Post by "Cassius" of June 1, 2023 at 9:43 AM**

I am not sure how far we will get in this next episode and whether we will start or finish the "relationship of pleasure to virtue" section. However I want to note that yesterday I spent some quality time reviewing Book Two of On Ends, which contains Cicero's full frontal attack on Epicurus and the notion that pleasure should be seen as the highest good. Reading that part again in the context of our current discussions meant much more to me than it sometimes has in the past.

When I first started writing on the internet about Epicurus I was more focused on the clash between virtue and pleasure through the sparring that took place with the Stoic school. This attack in Book 2 by Cicero (who goes on in the following sections to thrash the Stoics almost as much as he does Epicurus) is a reminder that we should not really be concerned as much about sniping over logic as we should be about the ultimate issue: and that is, what it is deep down that the advocates of "virtue" and of "pleasure" are really saying about the source of their commitment to their respective positions?

When reading Cicero it is easy to see that it is not "logic" that motivates Cicero's adherence to "virtue" as much as it is what I might call an "emotional attachment." Although Cicero will not admit it, it gives Cicero much "pleasure" to advocate for virtue, and that is an issue that must be addressed and answered in equally forceful terms. It seems to me that the best way to really persuade in response to a passionate advocacy of a noble lie is the passionate advocacy of "the truth," and Cicero does not provide what the Epicureans much surely have been thinking when they read his final version of "On Ends." Cicero's statement of this position is as forceful and important than anything the Stoics had to say about virtue, and it is neatly packaged here for us to review in full. Given its forcefulness, this is a much more important issue to address than even concerns about whether discussion of "absence of pain" and "tranquility" can be twisted into indolence and passivity. Some people, yes, are tempted to interpret Epicureanism as a form of Buddhism, but the far greater challenge that has in fact been the one that has kept Epicurus at bay for 2000 years is that he was a moral invalid and that a life of pleasure is hardly worthy of a cow, much less of a human being.

Here at EpicureanFriends we tend to accentuate the positive, and to the extent we talk about Torquatus we focus only on his positive argument, but what we find in Book Two is that Cicero muzzles Torquatus and brings an array of arguments that he doesn't allow Torquatus to answer -- Cicero lamely ends the chapter with Torquatus saying that Philodemus and Siro would be better equipped to respond on Epicurus' behalf.

I think we can learn a lot from going through Cicero's arguments and responding to them ourselves, and in the coming weeks I will look for ways for us to address those issues and muster a public response to them,