

If Death Is Nothing To Us, Then Life Is Everything to Us

Post by “Don” of October 7, 2023 at 7:37 AM

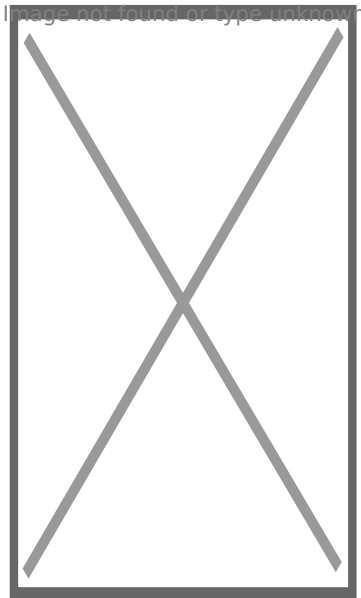
Good catch, Joshua...

[Quote from Joshua](#)

when it is time for us to go, spitting contempt on life and on those who here vainly cling to it,

I'd offer the following: The key phrase in that translation isn't the spitting on life, it's the "when it is time for us to go." I don't think VS47 has anything to do with having the option to "exit the stage" if we're in pain as above where Cassius implies (and states that outright).

VS47 is attributed to Metrodorus:



[Metrodori Epicurei Fragmenta collegit scriptoris incerti Epicurei Commentarium moralem, subiecit Alfredus Koerte : Metrodorus, of Lampsacus, d. 277 B.C : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

26

archive.org

And the Epicurus Wiki does a really nice job parsing the Greek:

[Vatican Saying 47 - Epicurus Wiki](#)

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3406-if-death-is-nothing-to-us-then-life-is-everything-to-us/?postID=26417#post26417>

This saying of Metrodorus hammers home that we *are* mortal. We are going to die. When it's time - when it's necessary - to shuffle off this mortal coil - an Epicurean should acknowledge that and not cling to life as if struggling against some offense to them. I'm thinking of the saying that pneumonia used to be called "the old man's friend."

[Quote from PubMed](#)

The term is attributed to William Osler, who in the first edition of his book *The Principles and Practice of Medicine* (1892) wrote:

In children and in healthy adults the outlook is good. In the debilitated, in drunkards and in the aged the chances are against recovery. So fatal is it in the latter class [i.e. the elderly] that it has been termed the natural end of the old man

If one has a terminal illness with no prospect of recovery or quality of life, one can, of course, take advantage of medical science but at some point all the medical intervention isn't going to change the outcome. And severe pain doesn't necessarily have to be a part of that; the body is just wearing out. The spitting in VS47 is directed at life (time to go!) BUT ALSO those who cling to it. Many have the anguish of seeing a family member hooked up to tubes and machines with no hope of regaining consciousness. Let them go. The last line is the attitude Metrodorus is advocating. When it's time to die - as it will be for everyone! - go out with a victory song!! Celebrate the life that was lived. The word in Ancient Greek is παιᾶν (paiǎn, "a chant or song, especially a thanksgiving or victory hymn, to Apollo under the name Παιᾶν (Paiǎn)"), from the phrase ἰὼ Παιᾶν (iò Paiǎn, "O Paeon!, Thanks to Paeon!"). According to Homer, Paián or Paeon was the name of the physician of the gods. ([Source](#))

See also

[PAEON \(Paieon\) - Greek Physician of the Gods](#)