

Episode 195 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 05

Post by "Cassius" of October 8, 2023 at 6:04 PM

The listener will have to be the judge of the final product, but I think we had a good recording session today and I think the final product should be a help to our discussions. One comment during early editing:

We talk a lot about how the division of the [principal doctrines](#) is a later and artificial add-on. Here is something that I think will help for this episode as to [PD03](#):

[PD03](#). The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of mind, nor of both at once.

In this instance, I am thinking that the conventional numbering tends to minimize the separate and equally important status of the two sentences. I would separate them so that they stand alone:

A: The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful.

--- That's the sentence you are going to hear from Torquatus over and over and over. But the second in my view makes a separate point:

B: Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of mind, nor of both at once.

--- That's a very important separate point: That not only as established in "A" is the limit of pleasure IN SUM the total absence of pain, but as a second and equally important aspect, IN UNITS of pleasure and pain in discrete areas of our experience, each UNIT is either a pain or a pleasure (and no combination or third alternative) for so long as that unit lasts in that "wherever" area of body or mind. Pleasurable experiences and painful experiences co-exist in different parts of experience like oil and water, but like oil and water they stay separate and do not lose their individual separate nature.

In the discussion featured in this episode, Torquatus continuously stresses point "A." Cicero has allowed Torquatus to state point "B" in Torquatus' prior monologue in Book One.

However when Cicero presses Torquatus on why Epicurus seems to be including two entirely separate things (1- pleasures of stimulation, 2- pleasures of normal living which do not involve stimulation) in his definition of "Pleasure," Cicero allows Torquatus in Book Two - at least in the section we focus on today - to refer only to point "A" as evidence for his position.

As I see it, in truth Epicurus' formulation requires both "A" and "B" for clarity: "in sum" the limit of quantity of pleasure in total is arrived at when all pain is removed, but ALSO, all the way

along the sequence of "discrete units," each experience of life which is not painful is seen as pleasurable. You have to have both observations at both summary and unitary levels to understand how "absence of pain" has two meanings: One in sum as the limit of quantity, and one in discrete unitary experiences that go to make up that sum.

If true, this observation would mean that both sentences in the form we have them in [PD03](#), which are not stated explicitly in the Letter to Menoecus, have to be fully developed and understood before the passages in Menoecus about pleasure -- which lead some to an ascetic interpretation of Epicurus -- can be fully appreciated as not saying that at all.

Let's see how this plays out in the podcast.