

Tips On Offsetting Pleasures Against Pains

Post by "Cassius" of November 28, 2023 at 6:30 PM

I am more in the middle of thinking than I am stating any conclusions, but while I am more convinced than ever that it is very appropriate in Epicurean terms to say things like:

"Absence of pain" means "pleasure."

"Absence of pain" is an identical term with "pleasure."

"Total absence of pain is the highest pleasure."

If someone tells me they are feeling no pain, either in some part of their body or in the sum of their experience, I can reply to them that they are feeling the purest and most intense pleasure, either in that part of their body or in the sum of their experience (respectively).

I am also more sure than ever that stating these things to the "average person" -- without some very elaborate explanation - is almost inevitably going to result in bewilderment, misunderstanding, shock, rejection, or some combination of them all.

And I think that my last sentence there was only slightly less true in 300 BC Athens or 50 BC Rome than in 2023 in any advanced modern country (it's going to be worse in the "less advanced" parts).

So what were the Epicureans in 300 BC Athens or 50 BC Rome doing to bridge that gap between in speaking to non-Epicureans.

Does the Torquatus presentation represent the latest in advancement up to that time?

Is the Torquatus presentation consistent with Lucretius' presentation, or are there any contradictions (I don't really think there are any), but if there were how would that reflect on what the "state of the art" was in 50 BC?

My personal view is that the words Cicero gave to Torquatus are not warped or misrepresentative in themselves, but they are missing this ****additional**** explanation which is necessary.

What does all this say about how modern Epicureans should approach this problem, because if anything the misunderstandings are getting worse rather than better. At least in 50 BC it looks like the Epicureans were in fact making broad inroads into the "regular people" world. I don't think they could have done so if they didn't have these "additional explanations" that we are talking about in threads like this one.