

Episode 216 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 23 - Why Does Epicurus Say Length Of Time Does Not Contribute To Pleasure?

Post by “Godfrey” of February 28, 2024 at 6:26 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Is Epicurus in fact saying that a longer life is not more pleasant than a shorter life, or is he only comparing the limited human span (whatever it is) to an unlimited span? Cicero is arguing that Epicurus said that length of time adds nothing to pleasure. Did Epicurus in fact say that?

Epicurus describes three components of pleasure (and pain): intensity, location and duration. You really can't single out any one of these components to generically evaluate pleasure. Ideally the three components, in a particular situation, combine to form an unmixed pleasure: the right intensity, the right location and the right duration. As long as the combination results in an unmixed pleasure, then you could say that it's more pleasant for it to last longer. But each component can have a limit which divides pleasure from pain in a specific circumstance.

Simply put, to my understanding the longer life of pleasure is more pleasant than the shorter life of pleasure. A life of any duration is finite, and not worth comparing to an unlimited span. Given that our lives are finite and happen only once, we should enjoy the life we have to the fullest. But when the time comes to leave, we don't invite pain by grasping onto the fact that life is, indeed, finite.