

Explaining In Summary Form How A Man In Extreme Pain Can Be Said To Be "Happy"

Post by "Cassius" of April 20, 2024 at 5:38 AM

Admin Edit: This thread was branched off from the Cosma Raimondi discussion at the link below. The purpose of this thread will be to discuss how to summarize the proper way to describe the wise man who is in the midst of torturing pain, and to come up with a summary to get people started on the distinction suitable for referencing on the front page of the forum.

Post

[Cosma Raimondi's Letter to Ambrogio Tignosi](#)

A Letter to Ambrogio Tignosi in Defence of Epicurus against the Stoics, Academics and Peripatetics

[translated by Martin Davies \(from Google Books\)](#)

epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/4084/

I have very little leisure at the moment to argue my views on the subject which your letters raise, being taken up with more weighty and much more difficult matters. I do not mind saying that I am very much occupied with my studies in astronomy. But since I have always followed and wholly approved the...



Cassius

August 29, 2023 at 7:42 PM

One interesting aspect of [Cosma Raimondi's](#) letter is that it appears that he emphatically rejects the view that a man can be "happy" even under torture. (This starts at 4:22 in the recording.)

We've been discussing that issue recently, and it is interesting to consider whether Raimondi was familiar with Diogenes Laertius' statement on that subject and rejected Laertius' accuracy, or something else is going on.

Quote from Diogenes Laertius (Bailey)

[118] And even if the wise man be put on the rack, he is happy. Only the wise man will show gratitude, and will constantly speak well of his friends alike in their presence and their absence. Yet when he is on the rack, then he will cry out and lament. The wise man will not have intercourse with any woman with whom the law forbids it, as Diogenes says in his summary of Epicurus' moral teaching. ...

Raimondi does not write as if he is disagreeing with Epicurus, but explaining and praising him, so this discrepancy with Laertius seems likely relevant to our discussions of the many shades of meaning of "happy," eudaemonia, "blessed," etc.

I do get the impression that Raimondi is embracing a sweeping view of pleasure that fully includes the health of the body and mind (therefore any experiences which are not painful), so I don't think Raimondi is off base.

To me, likely the key to resolving these issues lies in proper parsing and perspectives on the conceptual issue happiness. To my reading no one is arguing that the experience of being in Phalaris' bull, or experiencing kidney disease, is not painful. The issue seems to reside in being able to articulate properly the definition of "happiness" as being based on "pleasure" but not requiring constant agreeable stimulation, just like the definition of "god" is based on "blessed" but not requiring omnipotence and omniscience and other similar errors.

Maybe there are other ways to explain this discrepancy.

Has anyone here ([Don](#) ?) looked closely at the Greek which Bailey is translating in the quote above?