


Porphyry - Letter to Marcella - "Vain Is the Word of the Philosopher..."

Post by "Cassius" of May 26, 2024 at 8:58 AM

Over at facebook today someone asked about this same quote, and Holly expressed questions. [Elli gave an answer](#) worth recording here:

Holly hello and joy! In the above fragment, I smell the bad smell of platonism and stoicism. page not found or ty

The above fragment 221 in greek language is: "κενὸς ἐκεῖνου φιλοσόφου λόγος, ὕφ' οὗ μηδὲν πάθος ἀνθρώπου θεραπεύεται· ὥσπερ γὰρ ἰατρικῆς οὐδὲν ὄφελος μὴ τὰς νόσους τῶν σωματίων ἐκβαλλούσης, οὕτως οὐδὲ φιλοσοφίας, εἰ μὴ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκβάλλει πάθος".


First of all, and as Epicurus suggests in his LTH, is to grasp quickly the meaning of the words. Here in our situation we grasp the meaning of the greek word "πάθος" [pathos].


In my opinion this above fragment 221 comes from Porphyrys' platonic mind, and not from the mouth of Epicurus. Why I say that? Because...

Please look how controversial is with the following saying by Epicurus "on the wise man" by Diogenis Laertius. Since, when Epicurus uses the greek word "πάθος" [pathos] or in plural "πάθη" [pathi] he means the feeling (s) and not any "suffering".

For Epicurus the word for "suffering" is given usually and frequently in his writings with the word "πόνος" - PAIN (for the body) and "λύπη" SAD (for the soul) or "ταραχή" [agitation]. Also for the word "πόνος" [PAIN] Epicurus uses another synonym greek word that is the "άλγος" [algos]. For "algos", see the drugs that remove the pain, and we call them as analgesics.

The saying "on the wise man", by Epicurus - which is controversial with that fragment 221 by Porphyrys - in greek is : "Ο σοφός <<πάθει>> μάλλον συσχεσθήσεσθαι οὐκ ἀν ἐμποδίσει πρὸς τὴν σοφίαν".

In english: "The wise man will be more deeply moved by <<feelings>> than others, but this will not prove to be an obstacle to his wisdom". page not found or type unknown

Moreover, Epicurus in his letter to Pythocles, he uses again this word "παθῶν" [pathon] with the same meaning. The greek text is "ἔτι δὲ κριτηρίων καὶ <<παθῶν>> καὶ οὗ ἕνεκεν ταῦτα ἐκλογιζόμεθα". And means "and also of the criteria of truth and of the <<feelings>>, and of the purpose for which we reason out these things". 

And finally, please, think also and another english word that is the word "empathy" that includes the greek word "πάθος" [pathos-passion] and means something very important that is

: the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation. ☐

Conclusion: The neoplatonists, along with stoicism, the only that they have in mind is to remove, expel, uproot all the feelings [πάθη-pathē] from the human being. ☐Image not found or type unknown