

The Use of Negation in Epicurean Philosophy Concepts

Post by "Rolf" of April 19, 2025 at 4:13 PM

[Quote from Patrikios](#)

[Quote from Rolf](#)

Likewise, "absence of pain" and "pleasure" mean the same thing (considering only pleasure and pain exist), but the negative form, "absence of pain", implies the highest degree of pleasure.

[Rolf](#) , thanks for this thoughtful perspective. I understand the "spotless" analogy.

I'm wondering whether "**absence of pain**", *implies the highest degree of pleasure* fits for all persons. Couldn't the "**absence of pain**" lead one to simply be in a relaxed, neutral state; with **highest degree of pleasure** coming from a favorite kinetic pleasure?

I may be missing something in the way you described the analogy.

This is something I'm still wrapping my head around, so I might not be the best person to ask. That said, according to epicurean philosophy there is no "neutral state". There is only pleasure and pain. So a complete absence of pain indicates a complete presence of pleasure. The way I understand it, this "absence of pain" is more of an ideal state, a goal, rather than something that we are realistically going to achieve. As far as I'm aware, you could switch out "absence of pain" here with "100% pleasure" and it would mean the same thing. "Absence of pain" is just used to emphasise the completeness of pleasure we should strive for.

I suppose such an ideal state could present itself as a relaxed and tranquil state, but it could just as easily be a moment of ecstatic joy and laughter with friends. Epicurus wasn't talking about some state of perfect pleasure that lasts forever once achieved, like nirvana or something. Instead, our pleasure and pain levels are constantly fluctuating.