

Episode 281 - TD12 - Is Pain The Greatest Evil - Or Even An Evil At All?

Post by "Cassius" of May 19, 2025 at 5:27 PM

Early in our discussion of the text in this episode, Cicero brings up the very interesting case of Hieronymus the Rhodian. Cicero overall seems to live Hieronymus more than Epicurus, because Hieronymus holds "absence of pain" to be the chief good, and not "pleasure" as does Epicurus.

The example of how dramatically differently Hieronymus and Epicurus viewed "absence of pain" and "pleasure," and how Cicero recognized that they were viewed differently in ancient philosophy - is in my view one of the most compelling pieces of evidence that we today need to be very careful not to assume that we know what "absence of pain" meant to Epicurus. Hieronymus clearly understood "absence of pain" to be something different than pleasure, and in fact Hieronymus denounced pleasure. Epicurus takes the opposite approach, praising pleasure, and considering pleasure, not "absence of pain" as the correct term for the goal of life.

Past discussion of this is here:

Thread

[Are You Epicurean Or Hieronymian?](#)

According to Doctrine 3, Epicurus held that the limit of quantity of pleasure is the absence of pain. This is a function of the truism / premise that there are only two feelings - pleasure and pain - which means that in quantity, the measurement that describes the "absence" of the one is the same measurement as the "presence" of the other. But this observation is limited to quantity - it has nothing to do with the quality or the detail of the type of pleasure (or pain) that is being...



Cassius

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