

Daily life of ancient Epicureans / 21st Century Epicureans

Post by “Cassius” of May 28, 2025 at 1:50 PM

Robert I am working on this week's podcast and included within the section we read is this from Cicero attacking the Stoics in [Part2 Section XII of Tusculan Disputations](#):

Here's the intro:

Quote

Therefore, you allowed enough when you admitted that infamy appeared to you to be a greater evil than pain. And if you abide by this admission, you will see how far pain should be resisted: and that our inquiry should be not so much whether pain be an evil; as how the mind may be fortified for resisting it.

And here's Cicero's attack that I wanted to cite. This quote is useful in many contexts to show the difference between the Stoics and Epicurus, or between the Stoics and anyone who uses common sense rather than word games.

Quote

The Stoics infer from some petty quibbling arguments, that it is no evil, as if the dispute was about a word, and not about the thing itself. Why do you impose upon me, Zeno? for when you deny what appears very dreadful to me to be an evil; I am deceived, and am at a loss to know why that which appears to me to be a most miserable thing, should be no evil. The answer is, that nothing is an evil but what is base and vicious. You return to your trifling, for you do not remove what made me uneasy. I know that pain is not vice,—you need not inform me of that: but show me, that it makes no difference to me whether I am in pain or not. It has never anything to do, say you, with a happy life, for that depends upon virtue alone; but yet pain is to be avoided. If I ask, why? it is disagreeable, against nature, hard to bear, woful and afflicting. Here are many words to express that by so many different forms, which we call by the single word, evil. You are defining pain, instead of removing it, when you say, it is disagreeable, unnatural, scarcely possible to be endured or borne: nor are you wrong in saying so; but the man who vaunts himself in such a manner should not give way in his conduct, if it be true that nothing is good but what is honest, and nothing evil but what is disgraceful. This would be wishing, not proving.