

Episode 292 - TD22 - Is Virtue Or Pleasure The Key To Overcoming Grief?

Post by "Cassius" of August 5, 2025 at 4:28 PM

I found these two sections from Plutarch's "That That Epicurus Actually Makes A Pleasant Life Impossible" that are relevant to the ongoing discussion in this series of episodes about management of grief. This is from the Loeb Edition (Einarson - De Lacy 1967) with the 109 and 125 references to page numbers. The reference in 109 to "they" is to the Epicureans:

109 - (1101) They disagree with those who would do away with grief and tears and lamentation at the death of friends, and say that an absence of grief that renders us totally insensible stems from another greater evil: hardness or a passion for notoriety so inordinate as to be insane. Hence they say that it is better to be moved somewhat and to grieve and to melt into tears and so with all the maudlin sentiment they feel and put on paper, getting themselves the name of being soft-hearted and affectionate characters. For this is what Epicurus has said not only in many other passages, but in his letter on the death of Hegesianax to Sositheis the father and Pyrson the brother of the deceased. You see I recently happened to run through his letters.

125 - For this is the Epicurean argument in perilous disease and excruciating pain : ' You hope for some kind treatment from the gods for all your piety? You are deluded; "what is blessed and imperishable is prey neither to feelings of wrath nor of favour." You conceive of something after this life better than what you found in it? You are deceived, " for what is dissipated has no sensation, and what has no sensation is nothing to us. " Then why, you knave, do you tell me to eat and rejoice ?"' Why else but because for you, who are labouring in the storm, shipwreck is imminent, for surpassing pain leads straight to death. Yet a voyager cast away when his vessel breaks up is kept from sinking by some hope of getting his person to land and swimming safely through; but in these men's philosophy the soul can find no egress from the hoary sea since she is at once annihilated and scattered, perishing before the body. Consequently she is overjoyed at receiving this most sapient and godlike doctrine that the end of her troubles is to be destroyed and perish and be nothing.