

Beyond Stoicism (2025)

Post by "Cassius" of August 12, 2025 at 7:34 AM

Well thank you for starting my day with a reminder of all that is wrong with modern Epicurean philosophy! 😊

I will check out the background of what you posted there and have much more to say.

But first I will say:

For those of us who have read extensively into the background of what the texts really say, we can grit our teeth and remember that ataraxia and aponia in now way exclude the active pleasures of life nor make us want to go live in an ascetic commune where "religion" and controversial subjects are never discussed.

But the opening you have posted there is calculated to exactly produce the kind of "beautiful obscurity" that it does produce -- a vision of total resignation from active pleasures and withdrawal from society and minimalism that is truly indistinguishable from asceticism.

All you have to do in life is negative:

- Don't have any desires (at all, because if you do then they aren't fulfilled).
- Don't be afraid of gods or death (without any explanation as to why - just *don't!*)
- Don't worry about anything you don't already have (because you can get by with bread and water and air).
- Don't worry about anything terrible (not covered in the opening and held until later. They acknowledge that most people find this unconvincing, and explain it only with a reference to Marcus Aurelius repeating but not explaining what are essentially Epicurus' words).

Again, many of the things covered here have a grain of truth to them that can be saved from the wrong construction by knowing the subtleties of Epicurus' terminology. But the real problem I have with this approach is that 98% of normal healthy vigorous people reading this will read this and see it is the philosophy of undertakers giving seminars at nursing homes, and they will run as far and as fast as they can in the opposite direction. And even though i am no longer in my most healthy and vigorous years I will do all i can to keep up with them and get as far as I can from this brand of "Epicurean" philosophy.

I may understand completely that it is not necessary to live forever in order to experience the fulness of pleasure, but that doesn't mean I am going to live like an ascetic in a stupor during the years that I do have.