

An Epicurean Podcast

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Joshua I too consume a lot of audio podcasts, in my case (mostly in the past) listening in areas of two particular interests: keto/dietary advice podcasts, as well as linux for computers.

I have uniformly found the philosophy podcasts I have tried to listen to to be unhelpful. And I think a major reason is something you allude to as "esoteric arguments." Many of the philosophy podcasts I have listened to turn into "XX said this, YY said this, and that was a good point but MM had a better point....." and it all just goes round and round and round with no target ever reached. That may be a perfectly good format for a philosophy student learning to recite facts about different positions, but it's not a formula for putting out a positive program that actually helps somebody. It's necessary to take a position (which is really what the "dogmatism" charge is all about, rather than dance around every issue.

So I do think taking a position is important, but it's also true that even among students of Epicurus there are very different opinions on some fairly significant issues. I don't think we can ignore that those issues exist, but I think it is possible to state that they exist, give the arguments for each, and then put them aside in deference to the greater importance of the core points.

Issues about free will are a pretty good example, and probably issues about things like the canon and anticipations are of secondary importance. Quite a few podcasts could be done on the Epicurean view of gods, and the Epicurean view of death, without hitting too many divergences. (Of course there are issues as to interpretation of [Epicurean gods](#), but everyone is agreed that there are no supernatural gods.)

But when we then come to PD3 and PD4, especially if someone wants to refer to the "tetracharmakon" we almost immediately hit what is probably the most important issue. Absence of gods and absence of life-after-death are relatively straightforward, but we also need to be clear on the positive side -- in the absence of gods and threat/punishment of afterlife, how does PLEASURE step into that role and provide us the guidance to live life. That is something where it will also be important to state the varying opinions, but it will also be the minefield that - if not navigated correctly - will blow up the whole endeavor.