

# Comparing The Pleasure of A Great Physicist Making A Discovery To The Pleasure of A Lion Eating A Lamb

Post by "Cassius" of September 14, 2025 at 6:09 AM

[Quote from Raphael Raul](#)

I hold that reason is the tool that guides the Pleasure that we are experiencing, not the other way around. For example, pleasures come, while eating or drinking, let's say, and while one eats and drinks, one may desire to eat and drink past a reasonable limit. Thus, a reasonable person employs "reason" to decide, "No, I will stop eating and drinking now, because if I continue, I will get drunk and have indigestion later. So yes, we feel Pleasure, and those pleasures can be good or bad if we do not use reason to decide how far or how much Pleasure we should have.

The question of the proper order of priority is why according to Diogenes Laertius Epicurus held that:

*"Logic they reject as misleading. For they say it is sufficient for physicists to be guided by what things say of themselves. Thus in The Canon Epicurus says that the tests of truth are the sensations and concepts and the feelings.... Nor is there anything which can refute the sensations. For a similar sensation cannot refute a similar because it is equivalent in validity, nor a dissimilar a dissimilar, for the objects of which they are the criteria are not the same; nor again can reason, for all reason is dependent upon sensations; .... And seeing and hearing are as much facts as feeling pain.*

In your examples, the only factor that makes reason useful is that the feeling of pleasure and pain consistently report certain conditions as desirable and others as undesirable. It is not possible through formula and logical assertions alone to conclude that apple pie is good or bad. One piece is frequently good; ten pieces in a row are frequently bad. It is the fact of the result producing pain that we store in memory and retrieve to conclude through reasoning that we should stop after eating one piece. Reasoning is the mechanism through which we predict the future, but it was the original feelings that were gathered by memory and reason that led us to assert the rule of thumb as to how much to eat. And even that rule of thumb remains dependent on circumstances. Five pieces of apple pie in a row would ordinarily create pain, but if you have been starving in a desert for weeks. even more than five pieces may still be enjoyable. Reason is certainly a valuable tool, but circumstances change, and in order of priority pleasure and pain of actual people in actual life take precedence. In Jefferson's phrase, "the earth belongs to the living."

[Quote from Raphael Raul](#)

However, the main argument concerns the almost total subject view that all members held at last Sunday's discussion. The idea that all is subjective and that there is no objectivity possible in making societal valuations.

The goal of establishing the validity and necessity of "objectivity" is exactly what Epicurean canonics is all about, and no one establishes and defends objectivity better than Epicurus. The question is finding a true and real basis for objectivity, one which does not require made-up gods or standards of certainty that are logically impossible to achieve. What you are looking for in rejecting total subjectivism is exactly what Epicurus is doing.

It is Plato and the Stoics (including Cicero in our current discussions) who are the relativists and subjectivists. They assert groundless speculation about eternal virtues and forms as the real truth, but in fact their standards of truth do not exist. There are no eternal standards of right and wrong or laws that apply to all people at all places at all times.

This is where Epicurus saw that it is impossible to live successfully without a proper standard of what is true and real. Although there are no eternal forms or virtues, nature does exist with regularity that is predictable, and that regularity is how we deduce that there are some things that are regularly and even eternally the same in the nature of the atoms and the void. It is Epicurus who properly establishes that some things that are eternal and reliable do exist, and from that eternal nature we observe that nature has given us the feelings of pleasure and pain. We can use reasoning to help us understand the validity of following pleasure and avoiding pain, but in reality nature tells us directly through feeling, and we cannot override what nature gives us. Pleasure and pain are just as real to us as seeing of hearing or touching, no matter how we may try to reason ourselves into believing otherwise.

So Epicurus is not being inconsistent in (1) placing the guidance of nature through pleasure and pain above reason, while at the same time (2) saying that the wise man is going to conduct all his affairs throughout his life using reason. The two go hand in hand, but it is not reason that allows us to experience pleasure and avoid pain, but pleasure and pain which instruct reason on how to employ itself.