

# Gassendi On Happiness

Post by “Don” of November 14, 2025 at 6:50 AM

[Epicurus: Fragments - translation](#)

See U67 for even more (copied here for convenience. These include Joshua's citations, too; just with additional context.)

[ U67 ]

Athenaeus, Deipnosophists, XII p. 546E: Not only Aristippus and his followers, but also Epicurus and his welcomed kinetic pleasure; I will mention what follows, to avoid speaking of the "storms" {of passion} and the "delicacies" which Epicurus often cites, and the "stimuli" which he mentions in his On the End-Goal. For he says "For I at least do not even know what I should conceive the good to be, if I eliminate the pleasures of taste, and eliminate the pleasures of sex, and eliminate the pleasures of listening, and eliminate the pleasant motions caused in our vision by a visible form."

Athenaeus, Deipnosophists, VII p. 280A: Again, in the work On the End-Goal, he says something like this: "As for myself, I cannot conceive of the good if exclude the pleasures derived from taste, or those derived from sexual intercourse, or those derived from entertainments to which we listen, or those derived from the motions of a figure delightful to the eye."

Athenaeus, Deipnosophists, VII p. 278F: For Epicurus does not speak with face muffled, but in a loud voice he declares: "As for myself, I cannot conceive of the good if exclude the pleasures derived from taste, or those derived from sexual intercourse."

Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Philosophers, X.6: It is observed too that in his treatise On the End-Goal, he writes in these terms: "I know not how to conceive the good, apart from the pleasures of taste, sexual pleasures, the pleasures of sound, and the pleasures of beautiful form."

Cicero, Tusculan Disputations, III.18.41: Why do we shirk the question, Epicurus, and why do we not confess that we mean by pleasure what you habitually say it is, when you have thrown off all sense of shame? Are these your words or not? For instance, in that book which embraces all your teaching (for I shall now play the part of translator, so no one may think I am inventing) you say this: "For my part I find no meaning which I can attach to what is termed good, if I take away from it the pleasures obtained by taste, if I take away the pleasures which come from listening to music, if I take away too the charm derived by the eyes from the sight of figures in movement, or other pleasures by any of the senses in the whole man. Nor indeed is it possible to make such a statement as this – that it is joy of the mind which is alone to be reckoned as a good; for I understand by a mind in a state of joy, that it is so, when it has the hope of all the pleasures I have named – that is to say the hope that nature will be free to enjoy them without

any blending of pain." And this much he says in the words I have quoted, so that anyone you please may realize what Epicurus understands by pleasure.

Ibid., III.20.46: For he has not only used the term pleasure, but stated clearly what he meant by it. "Taste," he says, "and embraces and spectacles and music and the shapes of objects fitted to give a pleasant impression to the eyes,"

Cicero, On End-Goals, Good and Bad, II.3.7 (Torquatus to Cicero): "Does not Epicurus recognize pleasure in your sense?" (Cicero): "Not always," said I, "now and then, I admit, he recognizes it only too fully, for he solemnly avows that he cannot even understand what good there can be or where it can be found, apart from that which is derived from food and drink, the delight of the ears, and the grosser forms of gratification. Do I misrepresent his words?" Ibid., II.7.20: In a number of passages where he is commending that real pleasure which all of us call by the same name, he goes so far as to say that he cannot even imagine any Good that is not connected with pleasure of the kind intended by Aristippus. Such is the language that he uses in the lecture dealing solely with the topic of the Chief Good. II.8.23: Men of taste and refinement, with first-rate chefs... the accompaniment of dramatic performances and their usual sequel - these are pleasures without which Epicurus, as he loudly proclaims, does not know what Good is. II.10.29: But fancy his failing to see how strong a proof it is that the sort of pleasure, without which he declares he has no idea at all what Good means (and he defines it in detail as the pleasure of the palate, of the ears, and subjoins the other kinds of pleasure, which cannot be specified without an apology). I.10.30: the kinetic sort of pleasure ... he extols it so much that he tells us he is incapable even of imagining what other good there can be. II.20:64: ... Nor did he forgo those other indulgences in the absence of which Epicurus declares that he cannot understand what good is.

Cicero, On The Nature of The Gods, I.40.111 (Cotta speaking): Your school recognizes no pleasure of the mind which does not have its beginning and end in the physical body. I take it that you, Velleius, are not like the rest of our Epicureans, who are ashamed of those sayings of Epicurus in which he states that he does not understand how there can be anything good except sensual and sexual pleasures. And he then goes on quite unashamed to enumerate these pleasures one by one.

Cicero, Against Lucius Calpurnius Piso, 28.69: {Piso} would have it that Epicurus was an eloquent fellow; and indeed he does, I believe, assert that he cannot conceive any good apart from bodily pleasure.