

Are You Epicurean Or Hieronymian?

Post by "Cassius" of October 1, 2019 at 6:33 PM

Poster GW:

Yes indeed that is a principal doctrine, and that has a meaning within the full context of Epicurean philosophy which does not contradict the bottom line that PLEASURE is the goal. That is what this thread is about, Garrett, that it is not possible to take things out of context and still understand the full picture.

And nothing that Poster A just wrote contradicts the point either, Poster G. As A writes, Epicurus endorsed both pleasures that some term as "at rest" and some term as "active" -- but both types are PLEASURE. the key observation is that there are only two feelings - pleasure and pain - and that therefore as a matter of quantity, the "absence of one" is the same as "the presence of the other." This has everything to do with quantity and nothing to do about what type of feeling is actually happening at the time.

Poster G, (and anyone else reading along) - just read Cicero's words closely and you'll see the issue. Cicero was a master of the details of all of these philosophers, and he knew very well that Epicurus' view of the goal of life was pleasure, and that Heironymous' view of the goal was "absence of pain" and that these are two totally different things and are not reconcilable. That means that PD3 does NOT mean that "absence of pain" is the ultimate goal, or even "the ultimate pleasure." The key words are "maximum limit" or as others translate "the limit of quantity." This is not a discussion of the goal of life explicitly, but a discussion of a specific objection to pleasure that had been raised previously by Plato / other philosophers. The objection was that "pleasure has no limit" (we always want more) and Plato thought that was an effective argument because the logicians had decided that nothing could be an ultimate goal if it can always be made better (meaning that it has no limit). This is set forth in [Philebus](#) and elsewhere.

Epicurus pointed out the error in this reasoning by showing that pleasure DOES have a limit - and that limit is reached when our total experience is filled with pleasures of any time such that there is no more room for the experience of any pain -- all pain has been "crowded out."

And thus in another context Cicero described the Epicureans as holding that "nothing was preferable to a life of tranquility crammed full of pleasures." In Defense of Publius Sestius 10.23