

How To Convert A Neo-Epicurean Into A Classical Epicurean

Post by "Cassius" of May 1, 2020 at 3:25 PM

[Quote from melkor](#)

I do not believe in the "higher and lower" pleasures idea, but I do welcome legislation that seems to favor more pleasure and reject those that advocate pain of sort to humans or animals.

Melkor another illustration that I like to use to focus on the difference between the Epicurean perspective and the Stoic/Platonic or even Aristotelian perspective is this quote from Cicero, which I think represents the OPPOSITE of the Epicurean viewpoint. This is from the Loeb Edition of Cicero's Republic, and the point I am focusing on is the paragraph that begins with "True law is right reason...."

Personally I used to think this was one of the greatest things I had ever read, but now in retrospect I see it as an ultimate expression of the anti-Epicurean point of view, because there is no "God" who is the master / ruler / author / and promulgator of such law, and so this kind of "true law" simply cannot exist in an Epicurean atomistic universe:

Laelius But he¹ certainly ought not to have our young men as his audience. For if he really believes what he says, he is a villain; but if not, as I prefer to think, what he says is at any rate pernicious.

. . .

XXII. . . . True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions. And it does not lay its commands or prohibitions upon good men in vain, though neither have any effect on the wicked. It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to attempt to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times, and there will be one master and ruler, that is, God, over us all, for he is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst penalties, even if he escapes what is commonly considered punishment. . . .

Compare that to the last ten [Principal Doctrines](#), and what you know about Epicurean physics and the impossibility of there being a supernatural god, or a central point in the universe from which you can stand and say that only one perspective is correct, and the difference is just jarring.