

June 22nd, 2022 Epicurean Zoom Gathering

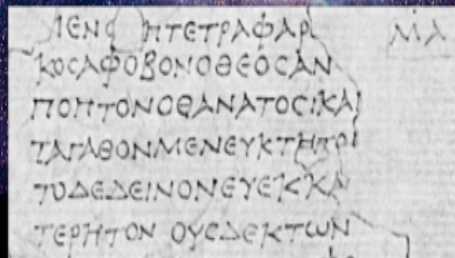
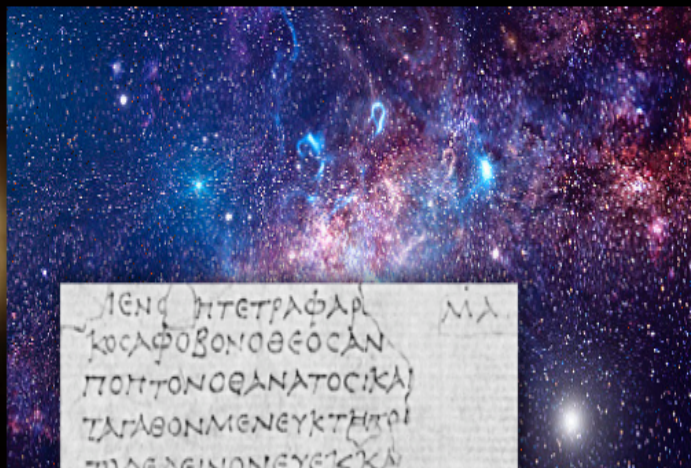
Post by “Kalosyni” of June 17, 2022 at 5:08 PM

OPEN INVITATION EPICUREAN ZOOM



Wednesday June 22nd, 8:30pm ET

This week's focus: PD 10



Join us for Epicurean philosophy,
conversation, and community building

The following translation is sure to spark debate:

"If the things that produce the delights of those who are decadent washed away the mind's fears about astronomical phenomena and death and suffering, and furthermore if they taught us the limits of our pains and desires, then we would have no complaints against them, since they would be filled with every joy and would contain not a single pain or distress (and that's what is bad)."[[note](#)] ([translation by Peter Saint-Andre](#))

You can [click here](#) to see other translations and forum pages.

Please join us on June 22, 2022 for further discussion on PD 10.

Brand new attendees: [please register through Eventbrite](#).

If you already attended once before you can simply re-use the link given in your registration.

Post by “Cassius” of June 17, 2022 at 6:16 PM

Great thank you!

Post by “Kalosyni” of June 17, 2022 at 8:41 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

The following translation is sure to spark debate:

I should rather say "fun debate" or interesting discussion 😊

Post by “Don” of June 17, 2022 at 8:51 PM

I may have to join in on this one in lieu of the 20th. Hmmm. I have some definite thoughts on [PD10](#) and Menoikeus 131. I'll register at Eventbrite just in case I'm able to attend.

Post by “Cassius” of June 17, 2022 at 9:01 PM

I know [PD10](#) has always been one of Don's favorites! 😊

Post by “Don” of June 18, 2022 at 5:45 AM

Take a look at this one too:

[Principal Doctrine 10 - Epicurus Wiki](#)

Post by “Don” of June 18, 2022 at 7:39 AM

Oh, and, of course, @Nate 's PD compilation *again* (I'll be bringing that up everytime a PD discussion comes up 😊)

Post by “Cassius” of June 18, 2022 at 10:22 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

* (I'll be bringing that up every time a PD discussion comes up 😊)

We've been referencing it every Wednesday and will continue to do so!

Post by “Cassius” of June 22, 2022 at 9:17 AM

Posted at Facebook:



Post by “Cassius” of June 22, 2022 at 5:15 PM

Just in case anyone needs them for the Zoom call tonight, here are the various translations of [PD10](#) (as compiled by Nate):

“If those things which make the pleasures of debauched men, put an end to the fears of the mind, and to those which arise about the heavenly bodies, and death, and pain; and if they taught us what ought to be the limit of our desires, we should have no pretense for blaming those who wholly devote themselves to pleasure, and who never feel any pain or grief (which is the chief evil) from any quarter.” Yonge (1853)

“If the objects which are productive of pleasures to profligate persons really freed them from fears of the mind—the fears, I mean, inspired by celestial and atmospheric phenomena, the fear of death, the fear of pain—if, further, they taught them to limit their desires, we should not have any reason to censure such persons, for they would then be filled with pleasure to overflowing on all sides and would be exempt from all pain, whether of body or mind, that is, from all evil.” Hicks (1910)

“If the things that produce the pleasures of profligates could dispel the fears of the mind about the phenomena of the sky and death and its pains, and also teach the limits of desires [and of pains], we should never have cause to blame them: for they would be filling themselves full with pleasures from every source and never have pain of body or mind, which is the evil of life.” Bailey (1926)

“If the practices productive of the pleasures of profligates dispelled the fears of the mind about celestial things and death and pains and also taught the limit of the desires, we should never have fault to find with profligates, enjoying pleasures to the full from all quarters, and suffering neither pain nor distress from any quarter, wherein the evil lies.” DeWitt, Epicurus and His

Philosophy 235 (1954)

“If the things that produce the pleasures of the dissolute were able to drive away from their minds their fears about what is above them and about death and pain, and to teach them the limit of desires, we would have no reason to find them the limit of desires, we would have no reason to find fault with the dissolute; for they would fill themselves with pleasure from every source and would be free from pain and sorrow, which are evil.” Geer (1964)

“If the causes of the pleasures of the dissipated released mental fears concerning celestial phenomena and death and distress, and in addition taught the limit of desires, we should never have any reason to reproach them [i.e. the dissipated], since they would be satisfying themselves with pleasures from all directions and would never have pain or distress, which constitutes the bad.” Long, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* 115 (1987)

“If the things that beget pleasure in dissolute individuals could dispel their minds' fears about the heavens, death, and pain, and could still teach them the limits of desires, we would have no grounds for finding fault with the dissolute, since they would be filling themselves with pleasures from every source and in no way suffering from pain or grief, which are evil.” O'Connor (1993)

“If the things which produce the pleasures of profligate men dissolved the intellect's fears about the phenomena of the heavens and about death and pains and, moreover, if they taught us the limit of our desires, then we would not have reason to criticize them, since they would be filled with pleasures from every source and would contain no feeling of pain or distress from any source—and that is what is bad.” Inwood (1994)

“If the things which debauched men find pleasurable put an end to all fears (such as concerns about the heavenly bodies, death, and pain) and if they revealed how we ought to limit our desires, we would have no reason to reproach them, for they would be fulfilled with pleasures from every source while experiencing no pain, neither in mind nor body, which is the chief evil of life.” Anderson (2004)

“If those elements that are productive of the pleasures of the debauched released them from the mental apprehensions aroused by natural phenomena, fear of death, and [obsessive anticipation of] pain; if, in addition, they formed their characters in such a way that they knew when to set a limit to their desires, we would then never have anything to censure them about: indeed, they would then be fully actualizing all the pleasures and in no way would they have either what is painful or what is productive of grief in them—and it is this latter condition [which they would be avoiding] that is morally bad.” Makridis (2005)

“If the things that produce the delights of those who are decadent washed away the mind's fears about astronomical phenomena and death and suffering, and furthermore if they taught us the limits of our pains and desires, then we would have no complaints against them, since they would be filled with every joy and would contain not a single pain or distress (and that's

what is bad)." Saint-Andre (2008)

"If the things that produce the debauchee's pleasures dissolved the mind's fears regarding the heavenly bodies, death, and pain and also told us how to limit our desires, we would never have any reason to find fault with such people, because they would be glutting themselves with every sort of pleasure and never suffer physical or mental pain, which is the real evil." Strodach (2012)

"If the objects that afforded pleasure to profligate men actually freed them from mental fears, namely those that relate to celestial phenomena and death and pain, and also taught them to limit their desires, we would never have any occasion to find fault with such men, since they would then be filled with pleasures from all sides and would be free of all pain and grief—that is, of all that is bad." Mensch (2018)

"If the things that produce the pleasures of the dissolute released our minds from fear of celestial things and death and pain, and if they taught us the limit of desire, then we would have nothing to reproach in them, since they would then be replete with pleasures from every source and devoid of pain or sorrow from any source, which are precisely what is bad." White (2021)

Post by "Don" of June 22, 2022 at 5:34 PM

Imma gonna do my best to be there tonight, so be ready to cross reference [PD10](#) with Menoikeus 131 including the ancient Greek. 😊

Post by "Cassius" of June 22, 2022 at 7:30 PM

Great!!!!

Post by "Cassius" of June 22, 2022 at 7:55 PM

Don since you are sort of the expert on this, I will set the zoom to allow you to share your screen, so if you want to show a slide or graphic or just some text we can do that too. Happy to

have you run with that part of the discussion.

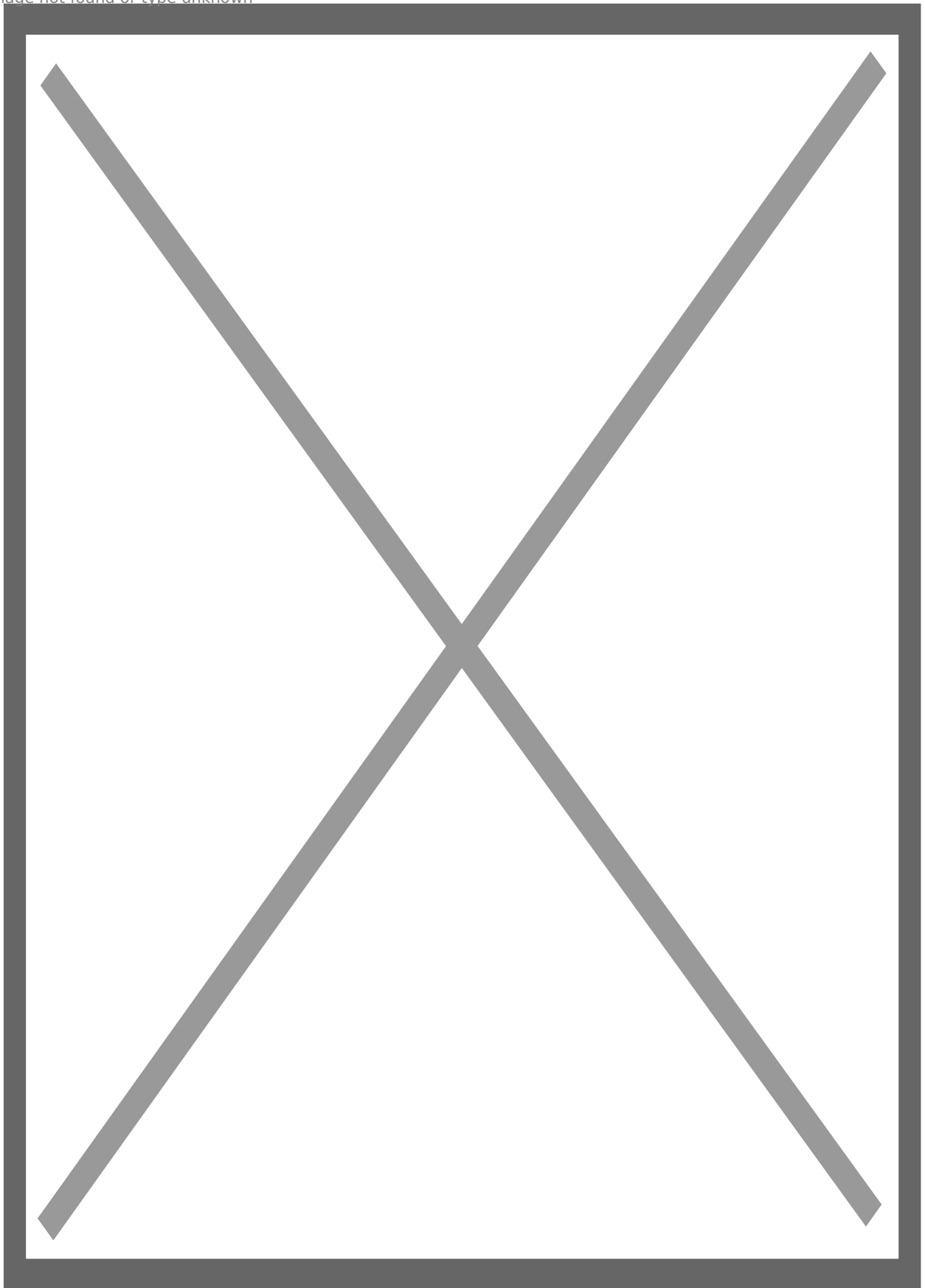
Post by “Don” of June 22, 2022 at 8:32 PM

Are you coming back? 😊

Post by “Don” of June 22, 2022 at 9:49 PM

That was fun! I hope I didn't monopolize the conversation. Here are a couple links I mentioned:

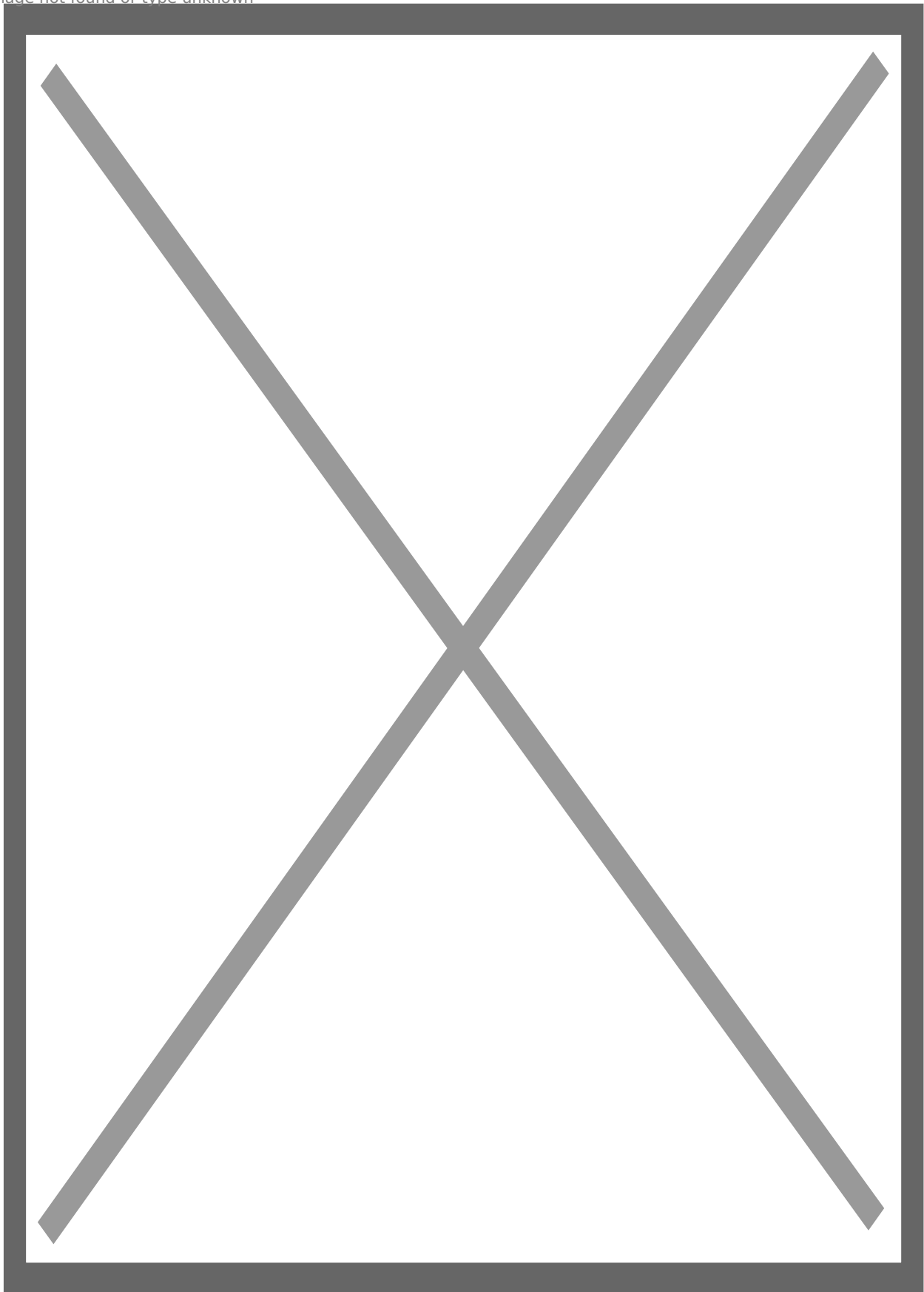
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[Podium-Arts](#)

Spoken Ancient Greek; texts in reconstructed pronunciation. For learning or enjoyment.
Samples of audiobooks (most of which are for sale on www.ancientgreek.eu...
[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

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[ScorpioMartianus](#)

Spoken Latin videos by Luke Amadeus Ranieri. [] [] [] [] Topics & tags: Latin Language Lessons for beginners, Latin Language, Classical Latin, Ecclesiastical...
youtube.com

(See his Ancient Greek in Action playlist especially)

[Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, BOOK X, EPICURUS \(341-271 B.C.\)](#)

Post by “Cassius” of June 23, 2022 at 7:28 AM

Don thank you for your presentation. Yes this stuff is fun and I hope you will catch a fever to do more of it. I don't know how it would scale if we had more than ten or so people but I do think we have a model here that could do a lot. Combining a quality presentation with making sure people have an opportunity to talk and engage is I think a good formula.

Post by “Kalosyni” of June 23, 2022 at 8:12 AM

Thank you [Don](#) for your translation of the PD last night, I don't know if we have your translation on the forum somewhere?

What sticks in my mind is the importance of the phrase "if they taught the limits of desires [and of pains]..." (they being the pleasures of the profligate).

That bit about pains in brackets is not in every translation above, which I find interesting.

Also this morning I was reflecting on how the idea of the limits of desires is very different from the idea within [Zen Buddhism that desires are inexhaustible](#). It is almost as if this Epicurean principle is an quick and reasonable short-cut to liberation -- no long hours of meditation are required. But yet what is required is some contemplation, and I still intend to study and "sit" with this (in a contemplative sense) till I get to fully understand what the "limits of desire" are (and may post more on that soon).

Post by “Cassius” of June 23, 2022 at 10:03 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

It is almost as if this Epicurean principle is an quick and reasonable short-cut to liberation -- no long hours of meditation are required.

Perhaps not "long hours of meditation" but there are numerous references to the need for "study" or "schemes of systematic contemplation, such as from Lucretius Book One:

Our terrors and our darkneses of mind

Must be dispelled, not by the sunshine's rays,

Not by those shining arrows of the light,

But by insight into nature, and a scheme

Of systematic contemplation. So

Our starting-point shall be this principle:

Nothing at all is ever born from nothing

By the gods' will.

Probably it is really important to distinguish between:

(1) Sitting on the floor with eyes closed, lotus style, palms up, evacuating your mind, and humming, as against -

(2) Rigorously and energetically engaging in a systematic and reasoned pursuit of the study of nature, observing numerous facts, evaluating them reasonably to determine views that can be held with confidence, rejecting and even spitting on the worthless and imaginary, holding in contempt those who say that such pursuit is not necessary, and then "never ceasing to speak the words of true philosophy."

Maybe it's just me but I see quite a difference between the two approaches 😊

Post by "Cassius" of June 23, 2022 at 10:11 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

That bit about pains in brackets is not in every translation above, which I find interesting.

That reminds me to memorialize what we talked about last night, that I think this has multiple levels of meaning, one of which is not the most obvious but may be among the most important:

That because we experience nothing after death, there is a limit to the pain which we need fear, and that is very liberating as it frees us from the threats of religion. Citing Humphries this morning:

You may,

Yourself, some time or other, feel like turning

Away from my instruction, terrified

By priestly rant. How many fantasies

They can invent to overturn your sense

Of logic, muddle your estates by fear!

And rightly so, for if we ever saw

A limit to our troubles, we'd be strong,

Resisters of religion, rant and cant,

But as things are, we have no chance at all

With all their everlasting punishments

Waiting us after death.

Letter to Menoecus:

[125] For there is nothing terrible in life for the man who has truly comprehended that there is nothing terrible in not living.

Torquatus from On Ends:

The fear of death plays havoc with the calm and even tenor of life, and to bow the head to pain and bear it abjectly and feebly is a pitiable thing; such weakness has caused many men to betray their parents or their friends, some their country, and very many utterly to ruin themselves. So on the other hand a strong and lofty spirit is entirely free from anxiety and

sorrow. It makes light of death, for the dead are only as they were before they were born. It is schooled to encounter pain by recollecting that pains of great severity are ended by death, and slight ones have frequent intervals of respite; while those of medium intensity lie within our own control: we can bear them if they are endurable, or if they are not, we may serenely quit life's theater, when the play has ceased to please us. These considerations prove that timidity and cowardice are not blamed, nor courage and endurance praised, on their own account; the former are rejected because they beget pain, the latter coveted because they beget pleasure.

Post by “Don” of June 23, 2022 at 10:23 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Thank you Don for your translation of the PD last night, I don't know if we have your translation on the forum somewhere?

Oh, I didn't translate the PD, just the letter. That's in my document to download on the Letter to Menoikeus.

Post by “Don” of June 23, 2022 at 10:51 AM

Final (LOL 😄) thought on [PD10](#): I think [PD10](#) is a direct refutation of the Cyrenaic position on pleasure. Epicurus and the Garden were getting painted with the same brush as them, and this is a firm statement that "We are NOT Cyrenaics".

Post by “Kalosyni” of June 23, 2022 at 12:47 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Maybe it's just me but I see quite a difference between the two approaches

Yes, for many reasons there really is a big difference. The strong emphasis in Epicureanism on choices and avoidances, and personal responsibility leads to a much better outcome, I think.

If a person ends up repeatedly chanting that desire, aversion, and ignorance are inexhaustable (by nature), then they are in a sense giving away their power and also stating a distrust in the ability of the mind to reason correctly.