

All Pleasure Is Desirable, Because It Is Pleasing To Us, But Is All Pleasure *Equally* Desirable?

Post by "Pivot" of May 11, 2018 at 12:06 PM

I used to be very attracted to the ideas of the Stoics. One of my favorite books which had a great effect on me was Seneca's Letters to Lucilius. Indeed I still find it beautiful - specifically, its arguments for why one should not worry, and its meditations on enduring pain and turmoil.

In many ways I find there would be agreement with Epicureanism. Of course, I disagree with its position of virtue as the end of action. That is unable to be reconciled. If one were to consolidate these two ends by claiming that what is virtuous for an Epicurean is what maximizes pleasure, it seems that there is much agreement.

For example, a main tenet of Stoicism is that one must order one's will to be in accord with nature. I would say Epicurus agrees with this. It is natural to pursue pleasure over pain. So ordering one's will towards nature is simply ordering it towards pleasure.

I am not very well acquainted with Stoic philosophy, indeed I have much more to learn about even Epicurean philosophy, but from my perspective I believe there to be a great deal of overlap since virtue, for an Epicurean, may very well be the end if it is what is pleasurable. Like the man who toils to provide food for his family - a virtuous act, but one that he pursues because it is pleasurable.

In fact now that I think about it, this topic is mentioned somewhat in Lucretius. I will restrain myself from quoting a paragraph since there is not a short sound-byte about it, but in Book 3 he mentions that life on earth becomes hell for he who acts outside of what is morally just: "But in this life there exists remarkable fear of punishment for remarkable misdeeds." Apart from great pain in punishment, the fear of being caught having committed a reproachable act often outweighs the pleasure attained from the act.

As for how I found the website, I believe I searched up "Epicurean forum" or something similar on Google 😊