

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

Post by "Pivot" of May 12, 2018 at 1:41 AM

Cassius: "If we are Epicureans who fully endorse and do not suppress pleasure, then we equate 'freedom from pain' with an experience full of active and ordinary and contemplative and mental and physical pleasures - all types, and we all understand that this is the goal."

I am definitely on board with you there, up until when you say "all types."

"IF, unfortunately, we don't accept the meaning of 'freedom from pain' to be 'pleasure' and 'complete freedom from pain' to be 'full pleasure,'"

I would accept this!

"I hate to think we have people who will come to the forum, read 'I agree with you that Epicurus was not against having much, but I believe he was against actively toiling for more than is necessary for one's freedom from pain,' and think that this is an instruction to lie on a cot in a cave with a supply of bread and water."

Certainly not! It would be foolish to throw away those pleasures which you are fortunate enough to have in your life. It is enough that we may be contented with lying in a cot with a supply of only bread and water, and perhaps a pot of cheese. Isn't this among the most beautiful of Epicurus' doctrines? That in this seemingly lacking state we are more contented, even, than the Hollywood millionaire who chases fame, wealth, and fortune, the one who "flees himself, but he cannot, of course, escape the one he flees, but clings to him unwillingly and hates him because he is sick and does not understand the cause of his disease" (DRM 3.1068-1070).

To be in constant pursuit of unnecessary pleasures results in pain. This in no way suppresses pleasure - it is the only way to attain complete freedom from pain, which is the limit of pleasure. That is why that I disagree that all pleasures must be sought. Fame, wealth, and immortality are pleasures, but you agree they should not be sought. In the same way, a lobster for dinner every day can be reasonably enjoyed if you become rich or fortune befalls you; however, if you were to eat a lobster for dinner every day you would eventually become accustomed to it and it would no longer become a pleasure!

Those natural and unnecessary pleasures we should pursue in intervals. The newcomer may misinterpret this idea that "freedom from pain" should be pursued, instead falsely gleaning that Epicureanism means pursuing asceticism. And just as easily, a newcomer may misinterpret the idea that "all pleasure should be pursued," instead falsely believing that Epicureanism means

pursuing empty pleasures such as wealth, fame, honor, immortality, and a host of others than one cannot begin to warn against.

My interpretation is that one should not seek out the cot with bread and water if he is better off; however, if a misfortune befalls him and he is left in a cot with nothing but bread and water, he ought to find contentment, unless there is a pleasure which he is lacking that is necessary for him to be happy.