

Welcome Philia!

Post by "Kalosyni" of August 8, 2021 at 12:29 AM

I'm appreciating reading everyone's insights here, and realizing I need to start some serious studying, since I have just barely begun to dip my toes into the philosophy of Epicurus.

This afternoon I read the article "The Philosophy for Millions" by DeWitt.

With regard to the discussion about my comment about "a worthwhile life"...Here is a quote from DeWitt's article:

"In spite of this teaching it was not the doctrine of Epicurus that pleasure was the greatest good. To his thinking the greatest good was life itself. This was a logical deduction from the denial of immortality. Without the afterlife this present life becomes the concentration of all values. **Pleasure, or happiness, has its place as the end, goal, or fulfillment of living.**

It was the Stoics and Cicero who concocted and publicized the false report that Epicurus counted pleasure as the greatest good. This is mistakenly asserted in all our handbooks."

So there are a lot of subtleties and nuances to examine, and I am thinking I need to take a good chunk of time to study, take notes, and write out any questions, before I do much more posting in this forum. (Plus, there is so many interesting threads posted inside the forum to read).

And this is also interesting from DeWitt's article:

"Outside of the school he instituted a method of disseminating his new doctrine by personal contacts. Each convert was urged to win over the members of his own household, his friends and neighbors, "never slackening in spreading by every means the doctrines of the true philosophy." Prospective converts were plied with books and tracts. Epicurus himself, like John Wesley, became a busy compiler of textbooks, and specific instructions were written for the proper use of them. He made outlines of doctrine for those who were unable to live in residence. The allegiance of disciples living in other cities was retained by epistles painstakingly composed. Thus the new school was transformed into a self-propagating sect."

So from this it seems there was quite a bit of dedication to passing on the teachings. And I would guess the teachings back then were much more exact and clear, without too many areas that were up for personal interpretation. But now, since so little of Epicurus' writings survived (and when so much of what did survive is mixed up with other schools of philosophy) it looks like there are a lot gray areas open to interpretation.

--- I am off to go study! 😊