

Differences between Epicureanism and Cyrenaicism

Post by "Cassius" of October 31, 2021 at 12:55 PM

Kalosyni I would turn your comment around and say that what you are saying about me is "too much of a black and white interpretation."

Yes I do think that some things about what Epicurus taught are indeed black and white (for example no life after death; no supernatural gods) but that others are in fact much more subtle (the role of pleasure and in fact the proper definition of pleasure.

I certainly agree with your categorization of friendship as among the top ways to invest one's time. That is exactly what Epicurus advised in PD 27.

I am sorry you feel that I am drawing lines between those with wealth and those without. Wealth is certainly only one circumstance that plays into how one makes one's choices, and wealth is certainly not an end in itself, any more than friendship itself is an end in itself ("Of all the things which wisdom acquires to produce the blessedness of the complete life...")

I have enjoyed our discussions and hope you will continue to participate. Remember, however, that the forum does have a purpose and a goal beyond just discussing philosophy in general, and so I hope you'll consider that in your evaluation of what I and others post here. I do my very best to make clear from the beginning that the purpose of the forum is to explore Epicurean philosophy from the perspective of its founders, and only after that to offer variations from their original theme. There's a lot of conflict among people who spend their entire professional careers studying Epicurus as to what he meant in certain areas, and that means ultimately that it's necessary to take a position on which interpretations are within the sphere of reasonableness as to what the ancient Epicureans actually taught.

That's why even as I speak against what I see as the errors of Stoic philosophy, I respect those who take the time to determine and explain the original foundations of Stoicism before they create their own versions under the same label. To get to the bottom of these issues there's really no other way than "frank discussion" and calling things as we see them, even when the result can appear to some to be excessively "dogmatic." You'll recall from Diogenes Laertius that to the best we can these are attributes of what the wise man will do:

"One wise man is not wiser than another. He will be ready to make money, but only when he is in straits and by means of his philosophy. He will pay court to a king, if occasion demands. He will rejoice at another's misfortunes, but only for his correction. And he will gather together a school, but never so as to become a popular leader. He will give lectures in public, but never unless asked; he will give definite teaching and not profess doubt. In his sleep he will be as he is awake, and on occasion he will even die for a friend."