

From The "Golden Mean" to the "Summum Bonum" - Useful or Deceptive Frames of Reference?

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 14, 2022 at 3:22 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

There *is* a single answer for everyone's telos/summum bonum: The "greatest good" for everyone is pleasure.

I don't think that there is one summum bonum for everyone. For some people God is the summum bonum within Christianity and religions (except Buddhism).

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

"the greatest good" is more of a philosophical argument carried on by others. In a materialist universe is it even possible to define a greatest good? For Epicurus I think that it's a functional guide as described in the Canon.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Another way of stating the issue:

If you are going to ask the question "What is the greatest good?" The answer is "pleasure."

But you also have to consider "Should you be asking that question?"

I don't think that trying to prove one type of a "greatest good" as being the best will ever be possible, because it is like saying mashed potatoes are better than baked potatoes. They are both ways to satiate hunger, and some people will prefer the taste of mashed potatoes over baked potatoes.

We have a hunger for happiness. But if nothing seems to satisfy us anymore and mild depression takes hold or mild substance abuse causes health problems, then we need some remedies. (btw...severe cases of these should seek professional help).

God may work as a remedy for some, but for those of us for whom "God is dead" we need something else to focus on as our goal and our summum bonum. Also, the abstract idea of finding perfect flourishing as a summum bonum won't work when circumstances within any human life are so messy...we still must live even when we struggle to meet basic human needs

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of belonging and acceptance. So Epicureanism provides a way to live and seek happiness when "flourishing" is impossible. We don't have to wait till we are flourishing to be happy...we can seek pleasure right away.