

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

Post by "Cassius" of February 16, 2022 at 8:59 AM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

The quote from Godfrey references this quote from Don It seems to me that the "actual linguistic meaning" of "good", at its most basic, is simply "that which provides pleasure." "Evil" is "that which causes pain." I'm pretty sure we can all agree on this.

To me it becomes questionable when it's stated as "the Good", and that seems to be just a philosophical argument which leads down a rabbit hole and is of limited or no practical use. All of the examples in post #37 are "lower case" goods and make sense both practically and philosophically as far as I can tell.

I'll repeat this more clearly below but it seems to me that the issue is that while WE can agree on this, using Epicurean terminology, this terminology differs greatly from all non-Epicurean terminology and so is very confusing unless we constantly restate our context.

[Quote from smoothiekiwi](#)

surprised how little of a hedonist (in the modern sense of the world)

Yes, another occasion on which I can say "I hate that word" ("hedonist") 😊 this is where Elli's curse on the use of "isms" terminology rings the most true.

[Quote from Don](#)

Okay, good! 😊 Now, we're getting somewhere. So, as a generic adjective or noun in common speech, we all(?) can agree on this this meaning of good and evil.

Again as cited above, WE can, but the rest of the world strongly disagrees. How do we handle that?

[Quote from Don](#)

I am glad Godfrey cited "practical wisdom is the greatest good." Do we have problems with that statement?

Yes it seems like we can line up more than one "greatest good" description from Epicurus. At least this one, and then the one about escape from a deadly peril, seem targeted at a greatest good, then of course we have Torquatus saying that Epicurus held it to be "pleasure." I wonder how many we could come up with, if we tried to list them?

So in terms of getting somewhere can we even regroup far enough back to decide what our goal is here?

1. I think we agree that Epicurus held pleasure to be "good."
2. I don't think we agree whether Epicurus held there to be one or many goods, although it appears that maybe the weight of the evidence is that he held there to be multiple goods?
3. I don't think we agree (do we?) that Epicurus himself used the formulation greatest good (?) Unless we accept what Torquatus wrote we don't have that in Epicurus' own words do we? Something that implies that there are multiple goods and that pleasure is the greatest of them?
4. I think we may agree that Epicurus is using "good" with a different definition than most other philosophers (?)
5. Do we have even a proposal as to how to deal with using Epicurus' definition while acknowledging that the rest of the world uses it differently? In the case of gods we can call them "[Epicurean Gods](#)." Are we suggesting that in this context we need to use the term "Epicurean Good" or "Epicurean Greatest Good" to avoid confusion?