

Pleasures of the soul, Values, Meaningful Life

Post by “Mathitis Kipouros” of June 25, 2022 at 9:30 AM

Hey [Matteng](#)

Just my two cents with what I wish I had learned earlier in my journey into Epicurean Philosophy, in which I'm still a beginner:

1.- There is a hedonic calculus, hedonistic calculus, hedonistic calculation, whatever you want to call it, that you can see as actually exercising your free will and choosing pleasures now instead of later, or pains now for pleasure later; you'll be doing this, consciously or unconsciously **once you recognize that pleasure is the end/goal of our beings**; this last sentence is key, and was the hardest part for me to see, as I put many filters from other philosophies before it, before realizing how simple it is; I find Epicurus philosophy is quite simple, regardless of how complicated it may seem, or may be made to seem. Incidentally, this hedonistic calculus, in my interpretation, is the swerve in action. The little tiny place where we at every moment can exercise free will, in a universe that is otherwise highly deterministic (I'm not say everything is determined, but Epicurus himself recognized that the atoms behave "mechanically", but for the little tiny swerve).

2. For the nature of the soul, and understanding how everything comes down to the body as it's been said before in this thread, and to arm yourself a bit better against superstition and mirages usually proposed by religious organizations, look for Thomas Cooper. There's this post about him: [Thomas Cooper MD](#)

3. Understanding the natural limit of pleasure. This is for the sake of dispelling any concerns or stresses or pains you may encounter about having to EXPERIENCE THE MOST PLEASURABLE LIFE ALL THE TIME, and producing pain for yourself by creating tension against the moments where the deterministic part of our existence will put us in painful positions that we will have to endure regardless; this mis understanding can put us in a track farther away from pleasure, because we would not be actually seeking pleasure, but an *ideal thus non-existing* accumulation of pleasure. **The natural limit of pleasure is the elimination of pain**, and this is important because of the following (that I can see at least but, again, I'm a beginner):

A. When in doubt, focus on eliminating pains, this IS OK, and it's the first type of pleasure. When you eliminate pain, you ARE EXPERIENCING PLEASURE. For most of us, our senses have been attuned to not even sense this, because of how good things are that we're able to spend time philosophizing in the internet. But this is the first pleasure available, and we can use reason to realize it. As I understand it, this is the katastematic pleasure of Epicurus, the one that "only those who are willing will experience", and the one that offended Cicero as he didn't think there were things humbler people could learn that he couldn't, but then again, he didn't seem to want

to.

B. After eliminating pain, all pleasures beyond this limit, are embellishments. Embellishment pleasures are great! Try to experience as most as you can (carefully calculating not to produce more pain for you down the line). Let these guide your life if you want even, but keep in mind the following point.

C. The limit of pleasure has been met. All of these embellishments don't add up more pleasure to your life. You won't experience them after you're dead, and you certainly won't take any memories of them to an afterlife. The maximum natural quantity of pleasure has been obtained when you eliminated all the pain, so if you want to stay at that, IT'S OK! If you want to go for more embellishments, IT'S OK! Just be weary of the slippery slope of wanting more of something that won't add more pleasure and may become a source of much pain.

I post this with modesty.