

Pleasures of the soul, Values, Meaningful Life

Post by "beasain" of June 27, 2022 at 8:25 AM

@Caius, I think my plane example needs a bit more explanation. First of all my rendering maybe a bit confusing, but I don't see this problem. When they offer you an upgrade in this situation, there is only pleasure, and no pain. So for an Epicurean this is great. Nobody is saying that you have to avoid by all means pain.

On the other side, it is clear to me that Epicurus warns against indulgence. He doesn't need champagne, he is happy with water and seems to recommend a frugal life.

[Diogenes Laertius](#):

"Epicurus himself says in his letters that he was content with nothing but water and a bit of bread.

'Send me,' he says, 'some preserved cheese, that when I like I may have a feast.' Such was the man who taught that the end is pleasure."

Also here in the same text:

"Sexual intercourse, they say, has never done a man good, and he is lucky if it has not harmed him. Moreover, the wise man will marry and have children, as Epicurus says in the Problems and in the work On Nature. But he will marry according to the circumstances of his life. He will feel shame in the presence of some persons, and certainly will not insult them in his cups, so Epicurus says in the Symposium. Nor will he take part in public life, as he says in the first book On Lives. Nor will he act the tyrant, or live like the Cynics, as he writes in the second book On Lives. Nor will he beg. Moreover, even if he is deprived of his eyesight, he will not end his whole life, as he says in the same work."

So, I imagine me Epicurus as a modest man seeking most pleasure in very natural simple things and not as a big spender with big needs. From there to "ascetic" is not that far away, I think.

In defence of Peter Adamsom, I have to say that he places Epicurus in a historic context, where hedonism was seen a coward-ism, and had a very negative press, and he want to stress the frugality and not seeking immediate pleasure but stable pleasure (moving pleasure vs stable pleasure) in contrast with the Cyrenaics, who seek immediate pleasure. Epicurus has been commonly misunderstood as an advocate of the rampant pursuit of pleasure, he, in fact, maintained that a person can only be happy and free from suffering by living wisely, soberly, and morally.

So this justify the use of "ascetic" (pleasure), I understand. 😊