

Do Pigs Value Katastematic Pleasure? (Summer 2022 K / K Discussion)

Post by "Cassius" of July 2, 2022 at 5:06 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

Could he have been discounting katastematic pleasure altogether and answering Plato, et al, that it is only a mental description based on experienced pleasures?

It's always dangerous to put too much weight on a few words without additional backup, but if the text supports the "imply" distinction as being something that has to be reasoned out, then your suggestion makes sense.

Clearly Epicurus did in fact state in other circumstances that, for example, we can understand that a limited life can have as great a pleasure as an unlimited life but it takes reasoning to reach that conclusion.

So that suggestion would not be unreasonable at all. What I think is unreasonable is the commentariat's suggestion that the only goal in life that anyone should pursue is "katastematic pleasure" or "absence of pain," and that pleasure as people ordinarily understand the word is something that is not worth pursuing.

I am not convinced that this understanding of the Epicurean worldview is properly called katastematic pleasure, but I am convinced that the understanding of the Epicureans worldview does allow a complete and satisfied life without worrying about gods and eternal torture in hell or the fact that we can't live forever.

The main implications that I would purge from the narrative is (1) that the goal should be defined as something other than "Pleasure," and (2) that when we use the word "Pleasure" as the goal, that there is any tension or absolute hierarchy between "active" or "resting" pleasures.

Said another way. I think that the confidence and strength of mind and calmness in the face of troubles that comes from the Epicurean worldview is in fact the most advanced and productive and accurate to the facts philosophy that anyone can hold, so in that sense such a level of understanding is the ultimate goal to which we all should aspire. As Torquatus says, such a person would be surrounded with pleasures of many kind (that are pleasurable to that person) and have no pain or fear of pain. That is a very good definition of the goal.

But is that definition of the goal accurately called katastematic pleasure? I doubt that a good case can be constructed for that position. Were someone to try to do it I suspect the academics, who I do admit to be adept with the citations, would pretty effectively shoot down such a

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suggestion. And to close with a warrior analogy, I am not at all sure that that particular battle is worth fighting, even if we are "David.". There are too many other Goliaths waiting in the wings who need to be dealt with more urgently.