

[Toby Sherman's Ancient Guide To Modern Well-being] That article I mentioned at the on line Wednesday 8/17 meeting

Post by "Cassius" of August 18, 2022 at 7:10 AM

But the thrust of the article is in sections like 5.6, which I think we will find leads us in a familiar and dangerous direction, a view that is easy to interpret as practical asceticism:

"However, there is another way of thinking about pleasure, as simply the absence of

pain. On this conception, to satisfy all one's desires is to experience perfect pleasure. Adding to the sum total of satisfied desires cannot increase one's pleasure further, whereas failing to satisfy any of them can diminish it. The only way is down. If we think of pleasure in this way, the maximising strategy is not merely risky in practice, for the reasons described above; it is theoretically incoherent. Multiplying desires cannot lift one above the point of perfect contentment; it can only create occasions for dissatisfaction. The only coherent strategy, if pleasure is limited, is a perfectionist one: we ought to limit our desires as far as possible, with a view to minimising dissatisfaction."

But this is not the end of the article.....

Or IS it his conclusion:

"Epicurus conceived of pleasure in the way I have outlined, as the absence of pain;

this conception underlies his ascetic philosophy of life. In the rest of this thesis I want to achieve two things. Firstly, I want to present Epicurean ethics in the strongest light possible, defending it against certain common objections. Secondly, I want to demonstrate that Epicurus was correct in his belief that there is a limit to pleasure, and therefore that perfectionism is the best method to attaining a good and pleasant life."