

Imagery On The Interplay Between "Pursue Pleasure" and 'Avoid Pain"

Post by "Pacatus" of March 29, 2023 at 1:50 PM

I just want to add that nagging anxiety over "choosing correctly" is itself a detraction from hedone and ataraxia (and I tend to react negatively that way - with a kind of emotional clutch - every time I hear the phrase "hedonic (or Epicurean) calculus" or the like; that's just me personally, from my own personal history - and I never enjoyed math ☹️). But the answer to that cannot be some cookie-cutter rote set of rules - as it becomes for some religionists, for example. (And I think Cassius emphasizes that point). I am also reminded here of Kalosyni's felicitous phrase: "tools, not rules."

I am also reminded of a slogan popular in 12-Step rooms: "Easy does it." Depending on how you inflect that, it can be taken to mean "take it easy" - or "easy [really] does do it," as opposed to stress-based "sturm und drang." And some people really seem committed (even addicted) to that kind of stress, and constantly worrying over whether they (or someone else) will "get it wrong."

Pleasure and pain are experiential: therapy (philosophy) can help guide us out of our ruts - but we make the choices however we make them. And we live with the experiential results (some of which may not have been well-anticipated). And, hopefully, we keep learning as we go. And, for me, ataraxia involves adopting an underlying serenity about all that - even in the face of uncertainty.

And so, when I feel that reactive emotional clutch, I tell myself: "Easy does it." ☹️ And, for me, that is part of (the attraction of) the Epicurean way - as opposed to say, the Stoics.