

Episode 196 - The Epicurean Arguments In Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 06

Post by "Don" of October 14, 2023 at 5:56 AM

I see where you're going, but let me provide the following possible revision or at least offer this to get your math didn't in my mind.

To recap:

A = pleasure (pleasurable sensation/positive affect)

B = pain (painful sensation/negative affect)

A1 = "Any experience of agreeable "stimulation"" (ie, kinetic pleasure)

A2 = "normal and healthy experience of life" (ie, katastematic pleasure)

$A = (A1 + A2)$

C the totality of experience in one's life.

HP is defined as "most pleasure possible in life is when 100% of life ("C") is composed totally of pleasure, which means 100% A (pleasure, either A1 or A2 or both) and 0% B (pain)"

Let's even give B the benefit of the doubt and say B1 is pain in the body and B2 is pain in the mind...

$C = (A1 + A2) + (B1 + B2)$

The height/fullness of pleasure would then be:

$C - (B1 + B2) = (A1 + A2)$

Or using HP as 100% pleasure in C...

$HP = C - (B1 + B2) = (A1 + A2)$

or

HP = (A1 + A2) height/fullness of pleasure is just 100% pleasure

HP = C - (B1 + B2) height/fullness of pleasure is the totality of life without any pain of body or mind

Since we're not gods, we can't achieve HP all the time, but we can experience moments of it. Even Epicurus admitted he felt the pain of his final illness, he just valued his positive memories more highly than the pain and took comfort in a life well-lived. Maybe I'd arithmeticize his experience as:

$$A1 + A2 + B2 > B1$$

Hmmm.... But pain in the body B1 is the absence of pleasure in the body but neither A1 nor A2 map neatly onto mind and body since memories can be a kinetic pleasure. The Pleasure Math is an imperfect science but for now I'll stop with

$$A1 + A2 + B2 > B1$$