

Discussion of Article: "Political Division In The Promotion of Epicurean Philosophy: A Prescription For Disaster"

Post by "Cassius" of September 29, 2019 at 9:34 AM

Elayne to New Poster E:

New Poster E, the decision process is the same in all cases. We consider the likely effects of different actions on our personal pleasure and choose to maximize it.

All new members were asked to say they have read the file document "Not Neo-Epicurean but Epicurean" before joining, and that document explains that we do not take the social utilitarian perspective of "the greatest good for the greatest number."

Epicureans treat our beloved friends differently from those who try to harm us. Our own pleasure is closely bound up in the pleasure of our friends-- and this is not a "should" situation, just an observation. It's natural for us to want our friends to be happy, and that can extend (depending on the person) to include the happiness of strangers. For instance, yesterday I spent a couple of hours volunteering on trail maintenance in my local land trust, and I got pleasure out of knowing this would be helpful to other hikers in my city. I didn't tell myself I should have pleasure from it-- it was spontaneous. Epicureans regard pleasure and pain as primary sources of information about our environment, which means we don't idealize them anymore than we would tell people they ought to start seeing a yellow sky instead of a blue one.

But we aren't indiscriminate. We don't abstract humans into numbers and treat them all the same-- that's the type of thing you hear in an idealist, rule-based philosophy.

That's why the process is the same for politics as for choosing what to eat for dinner. For each proposed law, I consider how it would affect my pleasure. I weigh also the consequences of spending time on political involvement for specific issues, vs using that time on something else. Sometimes I have found political activity itself to be fun-- depends on who I would be working with and other factors. I have enjoyed knowing I contributed to a handful of changes in my state laws, by meeting with legislators and giving them information.