

Calculus, Minimalism, Consumerism, Finding the Path

Post by "Godfrey" of October 12, 2019 at 12:20 AM

Quote

Maybe the final point to make is that it's empowering or even scary to think how much of all this is in our own hands, and that we have to decide for ourselves, but I think that's compelled by the nature of the Epicurean universe in which there are no gods telling us what to do and no "ideal patterns" to go by either -- not even any absolute standards of virtue or justice. We're really no different than any other animal -- we're here for only a short time and the best we can do for ourselves is use our time as productively as possible -- with "productively" being judged by the "feeling" we get from our life.

Well said Cassius! This relates to the discussion going on in other threads about the philosophy being a complete system beginning with a world view (physics) and working it's way to the practical application and consequences of that world view.

It's easy to take the physics for granted as it's more or less accepted scientific knowledge these days. Growing up in a primarily monotheistic culture which is at the same time science based, at some point it's necessary to really dig into the ramifications of the physics, and at that point it is "empowering or even scary" to embark on the Epicurean path.

Regarding choices and the hedonic calculus, I've been experimenting with what I might loosely call "Epicurean mindfulness". It's a fledgling attempt to apply the Canon to choices, and I guess the main benefit is to use it as a structure to maximize intuition and feelings. Basically it goes like this:

- Name the problem at hand
- Observe: what do I know about it, what do my senses tell me?
- Pause: just stop, and allow my intuitive mind to do it's work. The feelings tend to weigh in here, probably because I'm not drowning them out with thinking.
- Sometimes that's it; sometimes I add the thought of acting to maximize pleasure and see where that leads.

It's not a formula, but sometimes it's a useful tool in the toolbox fwiw.