

SOE20 - On mutual advantage

Post by "Elayne" of December 30, 2019 at 11:28 AM

Hiram, Epicurus described subjective pleasure as the only way of knowing what is good, which means "advantage" can only be understood as meaning something that increases pleasure. No one would be confused reading his words in that full context. A condition can't be a benefit other than through pleasure, because there's no other measure of benefit.

For most of us, things like having nontoxic air and water increase pleasure more than causing pain, but it is against reality to say this could be absolute or universal, or that deciding to use hedonic calculus will in every case make people agree on specific environmental policies/goals or even find it wise to participate in politics or activism. That's idealism. We are not neurologically the same.

It's certainly reality-based to observe that combining efforts with those who agree on a policy is a way to increase one's pleasure, and I have done a lot of that. And it's reality to observe that within the same species, there is often a lot of overlap in what causes pleasure. But none of that overrides the direct feelings of pleasure for a specific individual.