

Journal of happiness studies article on Epicurus

Post by "Cassius" of November 27, 2020 at 7:06 AM

I'm going to have to come back later to read the full article but on just the opening I would certainly dispute the part in red:

HOW TO ACHIEVE PERSONAL HAPPINESS, HOWEVER, HE CHANGED TO HAVE FOUNDED HIS philosophy on empirical facts. His philosophy about the good life brought Epicurus fame that has lasted till the present day. Epicureanism is a name for a specific lifestyle that seeks refined sensual pleasure, although this stance does not follow logically from the philosophy. Epicurus warned explicitly against the pursuit of luxury. Indulgence would increase desires and make a person dependent on the whims of fortune.

Good grief, there's a reason that Epicurus said the goal is "pleasure" and didn't fill the definition of the goal with all sorts of other qualifiers like "refined" and "sensual."

Further, though I see that there is preliminary discussion of it, I think we always have to remind ourselves that "pleasure" is what we all understand without need of explanation due to the faculty of pleasure. The word "happiness" however is a conceptual expression with all the limitations of any conceptual expression. There is no faculty of "happiness" - the faculty is of pleasure.

So as Torquatus said, a life of happiness is nothing else than a life of pleasure:

Quote

If then even the glory of the Virtues, on which all the other philosophers love to expatiate so eloquently, has in the last resort no meaning unless it be based on pleasure, whereas pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically attractive and alluring, it cannot be doubted that pleasure is the one supreme and final Good and that a life of happiness is nothing else than a life of pleasure.

Probably best in this context to remember Diogenes of Oinoanda too, in so that we identify happiness with the best mode of life:

Quote

Fr. 32

... [the latter] being as malicious as the former.

I shall discuss folly shortly, the virtues and pleasure now.

If, gentlemen, the point at issue between these people and us involved inquiry into «what is the means of happiness?» and they wanted to say «the virtues» (which would actually be true), it would be unnecessary to take any other step than to agree with

them about this, without more ado. But since, as I say, the issue is not «what is the means of happiness?» but «what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?», I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life, while the virtues, which are inopportunately messed about by these people (being transferred from the place of the means to that of the end), are in no way an end, but the means to the end.

Let us therefore now state that this is true, making it our starting-point.