

Elena Nicoli - An Excellent Presentation On Epicurean Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of May 7, 2018 at 10:47 AM

Wow, thanks for the detailed discussion Eoghan. Here are some initial further questions I would raise:

A - Haven't we always been taught that nothing good comes easily? Why should the best part of life be easy to obtain? I see people around me suffering and dying in misery and pain all the time. They didn't find a happy life easy to obtain. Doesn't that show that Epicurus was wrong?

2. Things which people pursue in modern society such as excess wealth, power and others opinion have no limit, they can never be sated even for a short time on the contrast things provided by Nature can be gained easily and sated easily such as food, warmth and relaxation. Modern people have a wrong view on what makes them happy.

<<< Yes, as to those who are in fact pursuing excess wealth and other limitless goals. But what about the great numbers of people who in fact live humble lives, but who find themselves trampled into the dust by many factors, many of which are out of their control, regardless of their own attitudes? What about them? Doesn't their tragic situation invalidate Epicurean philosophy, or at least mean that it is worthless to them?

B - Ok, we won't go to extremes like killing ourselves, After all, moderation in all things, right? But I hear you saying that the simplest life is the best. If I really want the best life, shouldn't I go ONLY for bread, water, and a cave to get out of the weather? That would be the purest application of Epicurus, wouldn't it?

4. Epicureans are ascetics, bread and water can easily be attained and are an easy pleasure to get (of course in modern times there are a lot more easily got foods) but this doesn't mean that we can't partake in other pleasures, in fact we definitely should but just remember that bread and water are always there, if other pleasures can't be got.

<<< according to dictionary.com, ascetic means: 1. a person who dedicates his or her life to a pursuit of contemplative ideals and practices extreme self-denial or self-mortification for religious reasons. 2. a person who leads an austere simple life, especially one who abstains from the normal pleasures of life or denies himself or herself material satisfaction. Is it really

accurate to say that Epicureans are ascetic?

<<<<"this doesn't mean that we can't partake in other pleasures, in fact we definitely should..." You say "in fact we definitely should" partake in other pleasures. **Why**, if the simplest life is the best? How should we choose between a life of 70 years on bread and water with no pain, versus a life of 30 years with some pain on the mountaintop full of vivid sensual and mental pleasures? How do we incorporate the statements: " And often we consider pains superior to pleasures when submission to the pains for a long time brings us as a consequence a greater pleasure" and "And even as men choose of food not merely and simply the larger portion, but the more pleasant, so the wise seek to enjoy the time which is most pleasant and not merely that which is longest"

And as you indicate, question 6 still needs more explanation, but that one is the most difficult without pretty extensive explanation of the letter to Menoeceus. Nevertheless, most internet discussion of Epicurus makes this question the focus of the philosophy....