

Some Epicurean conclusions

Post by "Cassius" of May 25, 2018 at 4:38 AM

I think you are correctly putting your finger on the area of disagreement: Your view is that "Ordinary common sense would classify some of the things on that list (knowledge, safety) as things that are *good in themselves*, "

Epicurus disagreed with that, as you recognize: "But of course, unlike common sense, Epicureanism sees pleasure as the sole good, the one principle by which the goodness of things is to be judged"

As you also write, this is one key: "Therefore, as a matter of psychology, a consistent Epicurean could not find pleasure in work." And of course this is the disagreement: " Ironically, he is cut off from the most common, the most easily accessible fountain of pleasure in human life."

I think one reason I am so personally convinced of the correctness of Epicurus' position is that I believe it to be above all realistic about what is possible. Life is desirable even though it requires effort- it means taking in the big picture and realizing that work is the price we pay for pleasure, and that even though pain and pleasure are separate feelings, we do chew gum and walk at the same time - we experience many pleasures at the same time we are exerting ourselves, just like Epicurus experienced many pleasures on his last day, even while in great pain. If we could be gods and experience nothing but pleasures continuously while also experiencing no pain, we would choose to do so, but we are not, so we choose the best available to us, and we savor the pleasure in that.

So when you say: "Therefore, as a matter of psychology, a consistent Epicurean could not find pleasure in work, in any kind of sacrifice of the present for the future. " Are you not simply observing that pain is undesirable?