

Considering the Importance of Mental Pleasures

Post by "Cassius" of May 30, 2018 at 2:09 PM

Just to continue the thought while I am able, here is part of where I am going: Unless I am the only one doing this (and I don't think I am) we today tend to see the word pleasure and equate it with things like "lounging in the hammock" (nearby photo) or the usual physical pleasures either simple or sex/drugs/rock'n'roll. I think we do that because we are attuned to the stoic/christian/majority framework that pleasures in general are disreputable and physical pleasures are especially ignoble. We think that's the only issue, so we think "a life of simple pleasures" is the ultimate issue, and that is the main thing Epicurus was trying to tell us.

But when Epicurus was telling us that true gods don't show favor or anger, is that all he was saying?

When Epicurus was saying that death is the end of consciousness, is that all he was saying?

I don't think so.

I think he's pointing the way to an entirely new way of thinking with those as the STARTING points, not the end points at all.

And in regard to "pleasure" was he talking about bread and water or wine and cheese or even luxury items?

I don't think so either. I think that the STARTING point of the analysis is simply that the "faculty of pleasure" is the superior parallel to the framework of gods and ideal virtue. We aren't supposed to focus on particular pleasures any more than we should spend our time whether Allah might not be god, but Yahweh might be, or absent those Zeus or Diana might be gods. Or whether the ideal of justice might not be true, but the ideal of equality or democracy or "everyone is precious in the sight of god" or "we're all brothers" might be true.

We're supposed to break entirely out of the framework of giving ANY credibility to gods, or ANY credibility to ideal forms, and realize that it is the natural faculty of pleasure that takes the place of all of those, and which serves as the true "guide" without at any point having any interim or final destination in mind. The faculty of pleasure can serve as the guide in 2000 BC Africa just as well as it can serve as the guide in a 2100 Mars Colony or a 2500 colony in another galaxy.

By focusing exclusively on particular pleasures we limit our scope and horizon to the lowest possible common denominator. We see the trees and the leaves and the bushes, but we never

grasp the full forest. What we really should be doing is examining the full implications of the fact that Nature has not given a god to rule over us or ideal forms to which to conform. What nature has given instead is a faculty to look to as we rule ourselves, and by which we can decide how high or how low we ourselves choose to go. Pleasure isn't a set of concretes, it is better thought of, as Lucretius suggested in book one, in allegory as reality's own "divine goddess" that supercedes all lower and false concepts of gods and abstract ideal forms.