

Criticisms of An Article Entitled "Epicurean Pleasure" (October 1, 2018)

Post by "Cassius" of October 2, 2018 at 9:28 AM

Responses to Common Errors:

Epicurus's biographers indicated that he was a celibate because he believed that sex was a major cause of unhappiness, jealousy and even boredom. Epicurus's food habits were also quite unpretentious, similar to a hermit's. He subsisted mostly on bread and water with an occasional lentil soup when he wanted to indulge himself. Clearly, his lifestyle was far removed from

>> I don't believe that is a fair conclusion at all: Epicurus is recorded by his main biographer to have written: "I know not how to conceive the good, apart from the pleasures of taste, of sex, of sound, and the pleasures of beautiful form." Unless he condemned himself to ignorance, which he certainly did not – Epicurus was no celibate.

According to Epicurus, one of the sure ways to find happiness in life is when we can detach ourselves from the tentacles of the commercial world of business. He wrote: "We must free ourselves from the prison of everyday affairs..." Here, Epicurus exhorts us to free ourselves from our enslavement to the world of business, where many of us toil perpetually in modern day "sweat shops," hoping that it will make us prosperous and happy.

>> I don't believe that is a fair either: VS 58 is generally translated: "We must free ourselves from the prison of public education and politics" which is much different than the "world of business" and Epicurus also said: VS 41. "At one and the same time we must philosophize, laugh, and manage our household and other business, while never ceasing to proclaim the words of true philosophy."

Friendship was always at the top of Epicurus's list of life's pleasures. He stated: "Of all the things that wisdom provides to help one live one's entire life in happiness, the greatest by far is the possession of friendship." Knowing that we can count on our

>> Not exactly – and not even supported by the quote. Friendship is not at the top of "Epicurus' list Of Life's Pleasures." Epicurus never stated a hierarchical list of specific pleasures which he endorsed or warned against. Epicurus stated that ALL pleasures are desirable because they are Pleasurable, but that some pleasures bring more pain than they are worth. And while friendship is itself pleasurable, the quote does not say that friendship is "the greatest pleasure," it is the greatest TOOL for "living one's entire life in happiness" – a very significant difference.

While Epicurus graced this earth thousands of years ago, his perceptive observations about a happy life still continue to resonate with many in the contemporary world. His message, "Nothing is enough for the man to whom enough is too little" sums up the message of finding happiness in our life.

>> The quoted phrase is certainly true, but does that particular phrase "sum up the message of Finding happiness in our life"? I doubt that very much, unless one's aim is the zero sum game of avoiding every effort that entails any amount of pain, no matter how much pleasure that effort would bring – and that is the error specifically denounced in VS 63: "There is also a limit in simple living, and he who fails to understand this falls into an error as great as that of the man who gives way to extravagance."

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< most call out for correction:
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