

An Epicurean Understanding of Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of October 9, 2021 at 8:46 AM

We cross posted -- much of the answer to your question is in the "animality objection" in post 82 above.

[Quote from Don](#)

I thought the "All pleasure is good" precluded the ranking of pleasure.

That would be correct if we considered all pleasure is good" to mean "all pleasure is THE highest good" but it is by no means clear (at least to me) that Epicurus was considering "good" here in that absolute sense, rather than in the relative sense in which there are many goods, some better than others. That's the reason for the SUMMUM in the "summum bonum" I think.

Another way of stating the question is that if he had been consistent, as soon as Epicurus formulated his philosophy he should have retired to his cave and lived a subsistence existence totally apart from the crowd. But he did not -- he lived a life of relative material luxury and devoted much of his time to philosophical controversy. Why - one naturally would ask? And I think the answer has to be in part that he valued the pleasures that he chose to pursue more highly - much more highly - than the pleasures he would have achieved had he retired to the cave on bread and water.

He chose - not the life of a cow - but the life of a supreme philosophical warrior and veritable "savior" of mankind! 😊

And I would say that what seems like the obvious answer to me is that he chose the pleasures derived from the life of philosophical study and writing and controversy as much more pleasant to him than the life of "grazing in the grass."