

Recommendations for Happy Living

Post by "Cassius" of November 19, 2021 at 7:05 AM

This was an allusion to "nihilism" - the emphasis is on what it means to think that "your life means nothing" - and the heart of that issue is the question of "meaningfulness."

Yes you are indeed made up of atoms and void, and in the Epicurean view there is no "divine spark" mixed in. So if you are looking at the entire situation in terms of matter and space, you are indeed a speck in a huge extent of space.

Does that mean you should consider yourself to be in every respect the equivalent of dirt, and recklessly spend your time as if it were no concern of yours whether you lived or died?

That's the direction I am going with that statement.

Does your life in fact mean anything to the universe? No - the universe is not an animate object and has no concern or evaluation of you.

Does the fact that the universe has no concern or evaluation of you mean anything to you? I would say that Epicurus would answer that by his many statements about the value to us of the pleasure of living, which is implicitly in fact our highest value. There are times when we do voluntarily give up our lives, but we don't make that decision by asking "Universe, should we give up our life today?"

So both are true - we are indeed in terms of quantity a speck in a huge expanse of space. But at the same times, our lives are of most important value to us, so that we should focus our effort on using our time the "best" way possible. And we have to have a philosophical judgment as to what is the "best way possible."