

A thought on duty to the whole world, and why virtue must be an instrument to happiness.

Post by “Don” of January 15, 2022 at 11:20 PM

I never thought of the "breaking the cycle of samsara/rebirth" as akin to "better never to have been born" but I can see where that could be inferred.

Oh yeah, Epicurus was NOT cool with that sentiment! He hits this hard in 126-7:

Quote

So, the one who exhorts, on the one hand, for the one who is young to live nobly; and, on the other hand, the one who is old to come to an end nobly is a good-hearted simpleton not only because life is to be welcomed but also because the practice of living well, nobly, and beautifully and the practice of dying well, nobly, and beautifully are the same. But far worse is the one who says, on the one hand, it is well not to be born; or, on the other hand,

"failing this, to pass through the gates of Hades as soon as possible."

[127] On the one hand, if what they say is persuasive, how does one not depart from life? For this is readily at hand, if indeed one was to resolve oneself steadfastly to this. If, on the other hand, this is in jest, one is foolish for making fun of things which do not admit of this.

I always get a kick out of the fact that Epicurus is quoting Theognis's poem in that line before 127. It tickles me because Epicurus resolves the $\mu\epsilon\nu$ (on the one hand) in his own writing using the $\delta\epsilon$ (on the other hand) in Theognis's poem. That's some clever writing!

Sorry, went off on a little tangent there.