

To think of pleasure as the greatest good is an error; pleasure is the telos and is not to be confused with the greatest good: DeWitt

Post by “smoothiekiwi” of February 13, 2022 at 3:45 AM

Quote

As a criterion the Feelings may take precedence over reason. Plato, for example, argued endlessly about the meaning of "good." Epicurus scorned this dialectic and arrived at a simple solution. His line of attack is as follows: the greatest good must be associated with the greatest pleasure. This greatest pleasure is easily identified: "What causes the unsurpassable joy is the bare escape from some terrible calamity."⁷⁷ This joy arises from the saving of life, the escape from shipwreck, for instance. Therefore life itself is the greatest good. To think of pleasure as the greatest good is an error; pleasure is the telos and is not to be confused with the greatest good. The testimony of the Feeling functioning as a criterion is decisive

That's the last paragraph in the eight chapter (p. 154)... and, to be honest, it left me confused. When life is the highest good- why does Epicurus then allow suicide? Why isn't the goal of Epicureanism then to prolong life to the maximum? Why do we then even pursue pleasure, when the highest good is to simply stay alive?

Probably that's some combination of a bad formulation from DeWitt and a misunderstanding of me- but I nevertheless am confused about this. What do you think on that?