

From The "Golden Mean" to the "Summum Bonum" - Useful or Deceptive Frames of Reference?

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 13, 2022 at 12:08 PM

I find this thread discussion to be very enjoyable, and important for a correct understanding of Epicureanism. Without thoroughly understanding these issues it will be difficult to begin to create local Epicurean groups. Also, for reasons that come up in Smoothiekiwi post...

[Quote from smoothiekiwi](#)

...biggest problem is to accept that there isn't any sort of abstract ideas flying around-universal norms and ideas. Platonism is so deeply anchored in our society that it's incredibly difficult to let it go....dogmas, absolute "right and wrong"-s etc. Just today, I had a discussion with my brother, who postulated that it's in the nature of each and every person to become better.

Epicureanism exists with it's unique principles and paradigms in the midst of all previous philosophical constructs, and part of the work is sifting through it all to become very clear about what Epicureanism is.

I think it will be difficult to establish local groups. A person must be predisposed to certain traits or habits or predispositions in order to be interested in Epicureanism...and I think that in our given times few people will be drawn toward Epicureanism...but does that mean we should give up? I am still moving forward with hope on this, that it will be possible. And this brings up the question of what sorts of traits/habits/predispositions must be present for a person to be interested in engaging with Epicurean philosophy? (a separate thread for this?).

In the few most recent posts in this thread are important Epicurean ideas, and these ideas need to be collected and put into small books (or zines) which we can give to people that we think possess the traits required for Epicurean philosophy.

Another idea comes up -- the need for "levels" within Epicureanism (a separate thread for this?)

- 1) "Epicureanism lite" - for people with less time or inclination to study
- 2) "Epicureanism engaged" - for people who want to put in serious study
- 3) "Epicurean guardians and guides" - for people who want to maintain the accuracy of the teachings and teach others

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I have always realized that the word "happiness" and even "pleasure" to a degree are conceptual abstractions. The word 'happiness' almost definitely is so, and we find "happiness" being used in totally different ways by different people, so much so that it takes fairly elaborate definition-building to be clear what we're talking about.

This is very important to think about. Happiness is always about a "story" that you are telling yourself. And it includes stories about the past and about the future, as well as the present moment. In Epicureanism, it includes ideas about the best way to bring about a happy life, and think we would all be on the same page to say that we know it can't be found in material possessions. But the "stories" we tell ourselves about our level(s) of happiness, are based on experiences that have a feeling tone of either generally pleasureable or generally painful. Of course life is a mix of feelings, but as Epicureans we hold to a goal of mainly pleasureable experiences which we would then label as "happiness".

This morning as I write this, I notice...Oh what a difference a solid good night of sleep makes! As well as a sunny morning with crystal blue skies! But there is still more than these simple pleasures to discover and cultivate in Epicureanism.

Everyone's comments here are so helpful, and for myself I will continue to contemplate these issues of pleasure, pain, happiness, and virtue.