

EPICURUS ON PLEASURE, A COMPLETE LIFE, AND DEATH: A DEFENCE - ALEX VOORHOEVE

Post by "Kalosyni" of July 31, 2022 at 9:39 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I'm ok with words like "full" and "pure" to the extent that they refer to quantities that are 100% of the respective issue. But "complete" (at least some of the modern interpretations of it) seems to go beyond that, and imply a certain list of activities that everyone should experience in order to call their lives "complete." And I doubt Epicurus would sanction that.

So I like the idea of a "full life" -- which brings up more. I would say that my own peak experience which lasted for maybe only 5 minutes while ecstatic dancing, was a feeling of living to the fullest, at that moment (and in which I had the thought, that it was in that moment that I could die knowing that I had lived the fullest). But yet there is the long term aspect of living a full life, which is more of an intellectual feeling combined with a heart feeling. And I like what Don says:

[Quote from Don](#)

"Life complete" is conveyed by τὸν παντελεῖ βίον. I contend that this is one of the more important phrases in the original Greek. This is the kind of life that is produced by following the Epicurean path. Again, we have to delve into Epicurus' words to really appreciate what he's saying. Παντελεῖ derives from παν "all, every" + τέλος "goal, end" but not just any goal or end, the ultimate, fully-accomplished end of something, its fully-realized purpose. So, Epicurus is calling us to a life where he believes we can find that every goal is accomplished, every purpose fulfilled IF we understand the limits of pleasure and desire. That will provide us with τοῦ ἀρίστου βίου "the best life" of all the possible ways of living.

I really like the "full life" idea, but yet I think it is good if it is also combined with the "life complete" idea -- because the feeling of living an incomplete life is not a good feeling. I think that happens a lot in modern life when people say that they have a feeling that their life is incomplete. I think this often points to a lack of good mutually supportive, emotionally supportive and enjoyable relationships. And when we say an incomplete life, we are saying that something important is missing. Now in Buddhism there is the concept of "unsatisfactoriness" which for some people can be a very subtle feeling (perhaps some people feel this feeling more than others). And interestingly there is the Vatican Saying 68 - "Nothing is enough to one for

whom enough is very little".

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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The more time I spend thinking on this, the more I think that there really ought to be a list! If you take a step back and think: human beings are a type of animal and what does the human animal need to feel happy? And then to unabashedly answer that question. (This could make for a good topic for our next 20th meeting!)