

PD19 And The Meaning Of No "Greater" Pleasure

Post by "Don" of August 11, 2022 at 4:14 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Is a normal person using these words normally and giving them their normal and ordinary meanings expected to understand that a life of 25 years contains the same amount of joy as a life of 50 years?

First, the normal/average person would most likely be included in what Epicurus calls the "hoi polloi" "the many/the masses/the crowd", so their understanding of life - almost by definition - may not coincide with what Epicurus would call "correct belief." So their normal understanding may be beside the point. In fact, he says "The flesh assumes that the limits of joy are infinite." That's the "normal" understanding. Epicurus was there to provide medicine not validate someone's preconceived normal understanding. So there's that.

Second, I don't believe it's a quantity, an "amount" of pleasure, that's being referred to. That seems a Platonic or Aristotelian argument against pleasure being able to be the goal of life. Epicurus fought against this "I need to rack up as many hedonic credits as I can. Then I win!"

Third, I am becoming firmly convinced that we need to do away with bulleted list of [Principal Doctrines](#) and begin to read it as it was written. As a prose text, not a list. If read that way, the answer is in the text. How do we "reason" it out? "the mind, thinking through the goal and limits of the flesh and dissolving fears about eternity, produces a complete way of life and therefore has no need of infinite time." We think through what it means for pleasure to have a limit. Well, it seems to me Epicurus is saying that once we have filled every nook and cranny of our minds with peace and pleasure and rid it of fears and anxieties and troubled thoughts and have a sure confidence of not losing that, you're filled up. You can vary your pleasure, but at that point your perspective on life is unassailable, filled with joy, in fact your mind never flees from joy, that is your default mode of being and interacting with the world. Living in that way is what can make one equal to the gods.

If someone thinks they need to try and rack up the hedonic points and need infinite time to do it (which will only end in frustration btw), they're welcome to ring up the Cyrenaics.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Please remember everyone that I am to some extent playing "devil's advocate" here in an attempt to draw this out more clearly.

Ditto.... In some respects 😊