

PD19 And The Meaning Of No "Greater" Pleasure

Post by "Don" of August 14, 2022 at 8:49 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Dewitt comments that Epicurus is pointing to a way to console us for loss of immortality (presumably as alleged by religious viewpoints). I am not so sure about that, and in fact I wonder if we fail to grasp some of what Epicurus is saying because we are trying to fit his perspective into a mold in which life can be viewed as fair to everyone. .

Oh my! I'm about to defend DeWitt everybody! Mark your calendars.

It's true that the [Principal Doctrines](#) literally laid out the "basic doctrines" of the philosophy for Epicureans to study and memorize. But Epicurus was providing practical solutions and philosophical medicine to real people. I think he had to provide "a way to console us for loss of immortality (presumably as alleged by religious viewpoints)." I'm not sure of the word "console" but he had to provide an alternative. This went hand in hand with removing the fear of divine punishment or reward. Even without Eternal Hell/Heaven, there was also the prevalent ancient Greek of existing eternally as a shade as Homer describes Odysseus' trip to Hades. Even as a shade, you still get to "live" forever. And most people, I believe, would answer in the affirmative if asked "If you were given the ability to be immortal, would you?" before, of course, thinking about the details. So, yes, Epicurus had to provide consolation or at least a reasonable alternative to the desire for immortality.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

It could be that Epicureans were flatly so convinced of the universe's total lack of overall plan that they weren't at all thinking about any "perfection" and that they were constantly thinking only on practical terms about how best to spend "the present" whatever that happens to be.

I think that's the *Epicurean* perspective, but the [Principal Doctrines](#) no doubt circulated as a "recruitment tool" as well. As you've said, [Cassius](#), they should make sense to "normal" people

