

PD19 And The Meaning Of No "Greater" Pleasure

Post by "Don" of August 23, 2022 at 11:38 PM

Thank you for the thought-provoking responses!

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

That's great and I also think it is highly dependent upon life circumstances. So perhaps your circumstances are supportive of living untroubled --.

I think being "untroubled" or having peace of mind *regardless of circumstances* is the goal of "philosophy" or seeking wisdom. But let me expand on that idea...

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

once one is settled down in life and lives in a happy and safe community/city, is secure with one's living situation (owns one's own home), feels fully confident in financial security (with enough savings to last till the end of one's life) has a safety net of good family and friends, and has no doubts about future well-being. Anyone who doesn't have any of these will have to use the very painful attempt of a "mind over matter" approach and try to repress their worries if they want to feel at peace

I'm not sure my circumstances are all as rosy as you might assume from the list you've provided about your assessment of my circumstances, but that's all I'll say about those. If we wait to have peace of mind until our lives are somehow subjectively perfect to an outside observer (or to ourselves), it will never happen. We humans will always find some goal unattainable, some aspect unsatisfactory, and we can think "If I can resolve that, then I can live "untroubled" or to have "peace of mind." My position is that "peace of mind" or ataraxia is achievable *regardless* of circumstances. To me, *that* is the goal of a practical philosophy which one lives. It's not "mind over matter" or ignoring problems or wearing rose-colored glasses. It's assessing each situation - each choice and avoidance - with a clear mind, with practical wisdom, and with a clear goal in mind...which, in the case of Epicurus' philosophy, is to lead a more pleasurable life tomorrow than I did today. I often - always! - fall short of that goal, but it's a goal nonetheless that I continually try to keep in mind even though I am a novice at best this Epicurean gig.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

And as such it may appear that that Epicureanism is for the "well-to-do" person, but I don't agree. I see pleasure as an antidote -- one pursues "pleasure as medicine" -- and

then in this way the philosophy can be applied regardless of one's level of wealth.

I agree that Epicureanism is not a philosophy for the "well-to-do" only. His philosophy attracted the most down-trodden members of ancient Greek society but also kings and wealthy Romans. So, I also fully agree with you that "the philosophy can be applied regardless of one's level of wealth." That is my point in the previous paragraph. I would simply substitute "level of wealth" for "circumstances" and say ""the philosophy can be applied regardless of one's circumstances." Do we end up agreeing on that?

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

For example, it may appear that there is no way to change or improve one's situation -- but if 10 years later things CAN change -- what do you do while you are waiting to get there? You enjoy life the best you can!

Absolutely! You carpe the diem while the sun shines to mix metaphors. But I wouldn't encourage people to think of their lives as "waiting to get" something. The idea is to enjoy the little things as well as the big things every day.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

I realize my own life reflects a situation in which I was not happy (living in an unpleasant house) and it took me 8 years to figure out what to do differently, to start moving in a different direction.

I'm sincerely glad that you were able to get out of an unhappy situation! Inertia, habit, and complacency are powerful forces (speaking from personal experiences both large and small).

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

I still stand by my word choice of "striving" -- because some of us need to choose to strive toward happiness, and strive to move toward pleasure. I suppose another choice of words would be "put in some effort" -- because we need to put in some effort into creating a good life.

I respect your decision to stand by your word. I personally have negative feelings toward that word for various reasons, so I may be inferring connotations that you're not intending. I like "put in some effort".

That said, Epicurus, to me, calls us to consider carefully what we are striving or struggling for. Is the goal worth the effort? Will the goal actually bring us happiness and well-being and pleasure, or is it a goal imposed on us by indoctrination of culture or empty desires?

I appreciate your willingness to engage on these topics. Your responses help me sharpen my mind and ask myself what it is I believe. These are some fundamental questions!