

Episode One Hundred Thirty Eight - Letter to Menoecus 5 - Pleasure Part One

Post by "Cassius" of September 7, 2022 at 1:38 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

So, I don't think it's helpful to think of desires as "good" or "bad". They just are.

I almost hate to comment on this because my thought is not major and I don't want to interrupt the stream of the posts from Don.

But this formulation prompts me to comment that while pleasure and pain are feelings that are presumably reported "involuntarily", I would think that many desires have a much larger component of voluntary choice in them. I realize the limits to this statement, but we can to some extent by willpower express or suppress our desires, while that is probably not as much true with pain and pleasure itself.

So the comment "they just are" may be true in that they are not inherently bad or good, but if there is a larger component of choice attached to desires then that would be a significant difference (which reminds me of the comment later in the letter about attaching praise or blame).

I remember and agree with what Joshua said in the episode about how often in the end it does not work to suppress desires. But nevertheless there probably is a distinction worth noting in how most feelings of pain and pleasure are much more immediate and automatic, while many types of desires involve complicated mental calculations that are chosen and far from automatic.

Sorry for the interruption - please carry on Don!