

From Stress to Happiness

Post by “Pacatus” of November 18, 2022 at 2:24 PM

Not sure if this is the right place to post this, but -

Last night we watched a lovely documentary on Netflix called “From Stress to Happiness.” The main guide is a Buddhist monk (though the Benedictine brother David-Steindl-Rast, now aged 96, also makes an appearance).

As I watched, I found myself reinterpreting into Epicurean terms - and concluded that their message (though very good) would be even clearer and better grounded from an Epicurean perspective (and without Buddhist commitment to such things as “samsara” - which, though not emphasized, naturally crept in).

Also, I thought that an expansive understanding of Epicurean friendship can cover most of the ground of Buddhist compassion and loving-kindness - even if an attitude of friendliness is not reciprocated (and self-protection, especially by withdrawal, is called for), that attitude (like an “attitude of gratitude” even in the face of travail) is still more conducive to our own happiness.

Also, for the first time, I really started to think of Epicureanism as a “faith” - without supernaturalism or strict religious insistence on “right doctrinal belief” no matter what (to be a “True Epicurean™”?). A reality-based faith that evolves well into our modern world (e.g. modern theories of physics, neurobiology and more developed understandings of deductive/inductive logic). A faith, rather than just an intellect-based philosophy as a good guide to life. A faith as an evolving way of life - in which I will always be a beginner (with my own fits and starts).

[All of which is to say that maybe I finally absorbed (beyond just intellectual assent) some of what Epicurus’ was actually trying to say - and has been said on here.]

Anyway, I just wanted to share my initial, unsorted thoughts on seeing the film.