

Did Epicurus Commit Suicide Due To His Disease? (Merger of Two Threads On When Voluntary Death Makes Sense)

Post by "Don" of December 7, 2022 at 11:47 PM

There's also the section on death in the Letter to Menoikeus (emphasis added):

Quote from Epicurus's Letter to Menoikeus

Furthermore, accustom yourself in believing that, for us, death is nothing since all pleasure and pain are in perception of the senses and the mind, and death is the absolute negation of perception. So, correct understanding is that death is nothing for us, and this is what makes the mortality of life enjoyable: not gaining an endless lifetime for oneself but taking away the yearning for not dying or immortality. [125] For there is nothing terrible in living for the one who truly comprehends that there is nothing terrible in not living. So, the one who says death is to be feared is foolish, not that there will be pain and distress when it is present but that there is pain in anticipation; because that which is present does not trouble, disquiet, or annoy, and anticipation itself pains and distresses one fruitlessly. Death, that which causes utter horror, which causes one to shudder, that "most utterly horrifying of pains" as it is understood by the hoi polloi, then is nothing to us. On the one hand, at the time when we are (that is while we are living), death is not present; on the other hand, whenever death is present, then we are not (i.e., we don't exist). Death is neither a concern for those who are living nor for those whose lives are ended.

But the hoi polloi, on the one hand, flee from death as if it is the greatest evil, then, on the other hand, on the other hand, they desire for themselves an ending of the evil (pain) in living. [126] So then, the wise one neither begs nor craves for living nor fears not living: Neither to set oneself against living, nor to imagine that it is evil to not live. Just as the most food is not chosen but that which brings the greatest pleasure; choose as well not the longest time but that in which one enjoys the fruits of that which bring the greatest pleasure.

So, the one who exhorts, on the one hand, for the one who is young to live nobly; and, on the other hand, the one who is old to come to an end nobly is a good-hearted simpleton not only because life is to be welcomed but also because the practice of living well, nobly, and beautifully and the practice of dying well, nobly, and beautifully are the same. But far worse is the one who says, on the one hand, it is well not to be

born; or, on the other hand,

"failing this, to pass through the gates of Hades as soon as possible."

[127] On the one hand, if what they say is persuasive, how does one not depart from life? For this is readily at hand, if indeed one was to resolve oneself steadfastly to this. If, on the other hand, this is in jest, one is foolish for making fun of things which do not admit of this.

To me, all those underlined parts are saying the same thing as leaving life "animo aequo."