

Perspectives On "Proving" That Pleasure is "The Good"

Post by "Cassius" of December 19, 2022 at 4:57 PM

Ha my bad memory prevents me from disagreeing with you about my saying something pessimistic!

But maybe what I said then is something I still repeat - that while this is true sometimes, it's unfortunately not always true -

[Quote from Todd](#)

The battle is half won! We don't need to convince people to pursue pleasure.

As per a post I made earlier this afternoon, I think the real heart of Epicurus is not to help everyone go along their same merry way, just better calculating the expectable results in terms of pain vs pleasure (although that is indeed a part).

Unfortunately the battle is far from won against religion and false philosophies to accept that happiness *should be* the goal of life. Far too many people want to ignore Epicurus' views on the nature of the universe and the proper approach to knowledge, and cling to their existing religious and ethical views, and in so doing they miss the thrust and the long term benefit . They still haven't - and refuse to - admit that there is no "good" other than what derives from pleasure. (Which is the danger I think you and I are agreeing on in too easily thinking that our own personal preferences as to politics or anything else are necessarily synonymous with "the good.")

And one reason for that is that inevitably in life crises will occur, and the standard calculation of maximizing pleasure over pain becomes very difficult to apply. That's in addition to the many who have already fallen into despair and find that they can't relate to a "pleasure" focus at all. If we aren't prepared on the "physics" and the "epistemology" then the emotional pain of the moment can easily cause us to fall back into despair or nihilism or both far too easily - or fail to climb out of it if we are already there.

Of course I don't think that's a "pessimistic" outlook - but I do think that were Epicurus here today he would stress those aspects of his philosophy as much or more than the psychology. In fact I think he would probably say "Look how little it has gotten you to focus on material wealth and the pleasures of the moment and how you still fail to understand your place in the universe and how to resist logical word games that have you as doubtful as ever about the ability to know anything at all."

Not disagreeing with you as much as using the opportunity to dig in as deep as possible on all the merits of Epicurus. 😊