

Epicureanism Vs Asceticism

Post by "Cassius" of March 14, 2019 at 1:00 PM

Yes I agree, but I think this is an issue that I think is very important. I know that we all observe the emphasis on materialism in most people, and we see that they need to understand that it would be more efficient for their long-term happiness to put aside the materialism.

But among those of us who talk about Epicurus and understand at least the basics of the philosophy, I think we can also observe the reverse error, of thinking that living for simplicity is an end in itself. They take their eye off pleasure as the goal just as much as if they were pursuing pleasure in any other way incorrectly.

And I observe something else: that those people who seem to focus on simplicity also seem to combine simplicity with a passive attitude of resignation about what goes on in the rest of their lives and the world. Renunciation of materialism quickly seems to turn into renunciation of all social life and interaction with others. How else to explain the seeming passivity of people who like Epicurus but who seem to accept the idea that Stoicism is just another way to happiness?

We may agree with the stoics that living simply makes sense, but we do it so that we can remain independent of outside forces that would destroy our chance to live as we like and pursue happiness as we like. We aren't running from emotion like the stoics - we are embracing emotions that make us happy and pursuing the joy of life while we are alive - which is our only chance.

Your general point is of course correct, Michele, but I think that Epicurus must have sensed the same concern I have for him to have come up with the statement [VS63](#) "63. There is also a limit in simple living, and he who fails to understand this falls into an error as great as that of the man who gives way to extravagance."