

Best Way to Introduce Teachings?

Post by “Daniel Van Orman” of March 15, 2019 at 10:33 PM

[Cassius](#)

Below are some responses to some of your statements. Thanks for your help.

"The issue is really 'What is hedonism'? The word has no obvious clear meaning -- 'Pleasurism'."

I thought it had a clear meaning among philosophers: the only good is pleasure and only evil is pain.

Although not a trustworthy source, Wikipedia seems to sum up its meanings well, starting with: "Hedonism is a school of thought that argues that the pursuit of pleasure and intrinsic goods are the primary or most important goals of human life".

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hedonism>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hedonism#Epicureanism>

"they look for ways to logically prove that something is 'the highest good' before they launch off in pursuit of it"

I completely agree that is the right thing to do.

I meant my opinion is the most important thing philosophy does is define "the highest good" and how to pursue it. It certainly has many other valuable aspects, I just value ethics above the other aspects.

"all truth is something that is 'true to us' or 'true to a normal human being in those same circumstances.'"

I absolutely agree. I believe this is called "universality"? The mormons call it "eternal truth" - a truth which is eternally true, no matter the circumstance, time, etc.

"As to 'hedonism' there is no accepted 'author' or authority who can answer such questions or tell us what the 'right answer according to Utilitarianism' is."

True.

However, the End is "greatest happiness for the greatest number". Other principles and definitions, such as commensurability, impartiality, etc. help one pursue that End.

"I am not an expert on Bentham or how he might have defined 'good.'"

"pleasure is in itself a good: nay, even setting aside immunity from pain, the only good: pain is in itself an evil; and, indeed, without exception, the only evil; or else the words good and evil have no meaning. And this is alike true of every sort of pain, and of every sort of pleasure." - Jeremy Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, Chapter 10.10

"Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think" - Jeremy Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, Chapter 1.1

"actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure." - John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, Chapter 2

"Ethics at large may be defined, the art of directing men's actions to the production of the greatest possible quantity of happiness, on the part of those whose interest is in view." - Jeremy Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, Chapter 17.2

"You'll find that Epicurus had a very clear set of principles which you can outline, and based on the answers you can line up basic positions"

I believe utilitarianism is the same way. However, one must understand a set of principles before they can use them to provide answers.

[Godfrey](#)

I agree, PD5 doesn't talk about responsibility, moral or otherwise. However, I think that means it doesn't contribute to that argument.

If you say there is no evidence Epicurus thought there were moral responsibilities, I will respond, where is the evidence he thought there were no moral responsibilities? There seems to be an absence of evidence on this topic.