

Best Way to Introduce Teachings?

Post by "Daniel Van Orman" of March 16, 2019 at 1:07 PM

His foundation: "This firm foundation is that of the social feelings of mankind; the desire to be in unity with our fellow creatures"

As far as I can tell, utilitarians don't give much more reasoning than that for why "greatest happiness for the greatest number" is universally correct. I think that foundation is based on sensations, "general observations are based on experience", but I could see an argument for otherwise.

I guess that answers the previous question of whether or not there is moral responsibility in Epicureanism. If there are no ethical standards which are universally true, then there are no moral responsibilities.

In utilitarianism, gods and mortals are held to the same, universal moral responsibilities: "If it be meant that utilitarianism does not recognise the revealed will of God as the supreme law of morals, I answer, that a utilitarian who believes in the perfect goodness and wisdom of God, necessarily believes that whatever God has thought fit to reveal on the subject of morals, must fulfil the requirements of utility in a supreme degree" (John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, Chapter 2).

As far as things go, I agree the force "universalizing" them are "general observations are based on experience". Whether a god or a mortal mixed an acid and a base, the reaction would be the same.

In my mind, this is what gives importance to the practical side of both Epicureanism and utilitarianism. Consequentialism, one of the central doctrines of utilitarianism, is entirely based on "learning by experience the tendencies of actions; on which experience all the prudence, as well as all the morality of life, are dependent" (John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, Chapter 2).