

"Absence Of Pain Is Pleasure" - How Would You Articulate That To Someone?

Post by "Don" of November 17, 2023 at 12:10 AM

[Quote from Eoghan Gardiner](#)

"Epicurean Philosophy teaches that absence of pain is pleasure"

"Ok, but isn't the goal of Epicureanism ataraxia and not pleasure? Also isn't the absence of pain just a tranquil state?"

How would you respond to someone like this?

The goal, the fulfillment, of a life of well-being consists of both the health of the body and the tranquility of the mind. The absence of pain in the body and of disturbance in the mind IS pleasure, because there are only two feelings we can experience: pleasure and pain. Being alive is to experience sensations, to FEEL things. At the most basic level, we either feel positive nurturing feelings, which we call pleasure; or negative harmful feelings, which we call pain. Within pleasure and pain, there are numerous shades and intensities of feeling; from ecstasy to serenity, from annoyance to agony.

But when we rid ourselves of the gnawing anxiety and the dreadful worry about death, divine retribution, and the like, we can have a tranquil mind, we can have "ataraxia." If we have tranquility of mind, we can FEEL our other positive feelings more clearly, untainted by the nagging worry that it'll all fade away. Once we rid ourselves of those fears and worries, when they are uprooted and torn from the ground of our mind, they can't grow back. We can then make better choices. We can pluck the ripe fruit of each moment and REALLY savor it. That is the goal of Epicureanism. If you say a tranquil mind - ataraxia - is the only goal and don't include the health of the body, you stop short of the fulfilling life that Epicurus offers. Yes, you NEED a tranquil mind free from anxiety and worry... but you also need a healthy body attached to that tranquil mind. The mind works through the body, and the body provides the mind with its seat. We are both a mind and a body, together, inseparable. Pleasure is the path but also the fulfillment of prudent choices and rejections. Tranquility - ataraxia - makes the sea calm for sailing. When other pleasures are encountered, they are welcomed but not greedily grasped. You are already at the fullness of pleasure! The horizon beckons with a variety of pleasures to experience. Sail off. You are already filled with pleasure, secure in your own self-reliance, your mind is strong and unassailable by worry, anxiety, fears, and dread. You've drunk the wormwood through the honeyed rim. The medicine is sweet. The physician was correct. This is the way to live!