

Is All "Ataraxia" Equal?

Post by "Don" of November 19, 2023 at 11:13 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

the question is "Does Epicurean philosophy leave the door wide open to *whatever* interpretation of pleasure one desires to make?"

For Epicurus, pleasure is simply that feeling which is not painful derived from actions or states which do not result in struggle, distress, anxiety, pain, etc. Additionally, Pleasure comes in two "flavors" - that which is felt in a state of rest ; that which consists in motion and activity.

What seems to get interpreted is the activity *leading to* pleasure and *the consequences flowing from* pleasure. I think that's also why the pleasure from states is so important because it's source is a state of existence and not an action (something kinetic) and there are really no consequences other than continued pleasure in the state. Plus, we always have access to the pleasure deriving from a state of existence if we only will experience it.

I'm going to quote the letter to Menoikeus with some emphasis:

Quote

[128] The steady contemplation of these things equips one to know how to decide all choice and rejection for the health of the body and for the tranquility of the mind, that is for our physical and our mental existence, since this is the goal of a blessed life. For the sake of this, we do everything in order to neither be in bodily or mental pain nor to be in fear or dread; and so, when once this has come into being around us, it sets free all of the calamity, distress, and suffering of the mind, seeing that the living being has no need to go in search of something that is lacking for the good of our mental and physical existence. For it is then that we need pleasure, if we were to be in pain from the pleasure not being present; but if we were to not be in pain, we no longer desire or beg for pleasure. And this is why we say pleasure is the foundation and fulfillment of the blessed life. [129] Because we perceived pleasure as a fundamental good and common to our nature, and so, as a result of this, we begin every choice and rejection against this, judging every good thing by the standard of **how that pleasure affects us or how we react to considering experiencing that pleasure.** And because pleasure is the fundamental and inborn good, this is why not every pleasure is seized and we pass by many pleasures when greater unpleasant things were to result for us as a result: and we think many pains better than pleasures whenever greater pleasure were to follow for a longer time by patiently abiding the pain. [130] So, all pleasure,

through its nature, belongs to us as a good; however, not all are elected; and just as all pains are entirely evil by their nature, so not all are always to be shunned. ***It is proper when judging these things to consider what is advantageous and what is not advantageous for you; in other words (i.e., what the consequences will be).*** We consult the consequences of our actions; because, on the one hand, pleasure over time can lead to pain; and on the other hand, pain can lead to pleasure.

It seems to me that Epicurus is a [consequentialist](#). The "correct" choice to make is based on the consequences of that choice.

Or did you have something entirely different in mind when you used "interpretation"? I suppose should have asked before I went off half-cocked.