

Given The Stress That Many Greek Philosophers' Placed On "Virtue" or a perfect view of "The Good" As The Ultimate Goal, To What Extent Would An Epicurus Have Considered That Approach An "Unnatural and Unnecessary Desire?"

Post by "Joshua" of February 26, 2024 at 6:22 PM

Is the desire to live virtuously--and I take that to mean, to live morally--necessary? It is not necessary for the continuance of life, but it *might* be necessary for happiness; is that the meaning of [PD05](#)?

Quote

[PD05](#). It is impossible to live a pleasant life without living wisely and honorably and justly, and it is impossible to live wisely and honorably and justly without living pleasantly. Whenever any one of these is lacking, when, for instance, the man is not able to live wisely, though he lives honorably and justly, it is impossible for him to live a pleasant life.

Set that to one side. What about the other part; is it *natural*? If it's necessary, it must be natural. If it's unnecessary, it *could* be natural. I suppose that it is quite natural, even if I'm not sure whether it's necessary.

Then, is the desire to be *perfectly* virtuous necessary? Let's test that theory;

Quote

[PD30](#). Those natural desires which entail no pain when not gratified, though their objects are vehemently pursued, are also due to illusory opinion; and when they are not got rid of, it is not because of their own nature, but because of the person's illusory opinion.

If one fails in their desire to live with perfect virtue, does their failure entail pain? Disappointment, perhaps, but surely not pain. So it is unnecessary; it might be natural, but it is certainly unnecessary.

Virtue Perfection of virtue

Natural? Yes Probably Not

Necessary? Probably No

My personal opinion; the desire for the *perfection* of virtue is both unnatural and unnecessary. It is in the same class as the desires for power, fame, luxurious riches, and eternal life. These desires are empty; we pursue them in the false belief that they will provide a position of security in which to enjoy pleasure, but they not only fail in providing this security, they actively thwart our attempt to obtain it.