

The Axiology of Pain and Pleasure (are they intrinsic good/bad ?)

Post by "Godfrey" of June 5, 2024 at 4:22 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

If those things "washed away the mind's fears about astronomical phenomena and death and suffering, and furthermore if they taught us the limits of our pains and desires" *then* we'd have no problem with them. But those *things* don't wash away the fears. They're pleasurable activities, and Epicurus never denies that. But those things alone won't get us down the road to dispelling fears. It seems to me he's saying you have get the fears dispelled first... then you can enjoy various "delights" unencumbered by those fears.

Another point of view, which I may have expressed sometime since 2020, is that it's possible for pleasures of the prodigal to teach us some of these things. I presume that many of us have stories of pursuing excessive pleasures in our youth, only to begin to discover the limits of our pains and desires in the process. Or for them to teach us about death, or our place in the world pertaining to astronomical phenomena (perhaps a stupidly near-death experience, or staring at the night sky while in a state of inebriation).

To me this can be a description of learning by experience and book learning. As psychological hedonists, this is how we learn (sorry, I couldn't resist tossing that out there ☹️). So I don't read this as literally as [Don](#) , but I also don't read it as an endorsement of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. More as a description of the way things are. And with the caveat that I'm limited to reading it in English....

Some (most?) of us, for better or for worse, need to make mistakes before we get to a place where the fears are dispelled and replaced with understanding.