

An Anti-Epicurean Article - "The Meaning of Life Is Not Happiness" (For Future Reference)

Post by "SillyApe" of November 17, 2024 at 2:36 PM

So, what do we have here? An author talking about metaphysical speculations, Christian beliefs, and the so desired(and abstract) "meaning".

"Meaning" is a funny thing. As the author says, we should pursuit it instead of "happiness". The question is: why do humans chase meaning? In my view, it is because it helps us endure the pains of life. If we go through a terrible situation for no reason at all, it feels way worse than if there was a "meaning" behind it all. That means that "meaning" is just a tool for the increase of our pleasure and the decrease of our pain.

Another factor that contributes to the human desire for "meaning" is our difficulty in accepting our own insignificance. It has always been hard for us to understand that we're just some random creatures walking on this planet, born not for a reason, but only by chance. In a desperate attempt to change that, we try to give "meaning" to ourselves, which would be fulfilled either in this World or in a theoretical "Next World".

Though I understand where it comes from, I still think this is not a helpful tool. Just like any other supernatural or abstract concept, it can quickly degenerate into senseless goals built upon absolutely nothing. Pure rationalizations of the human mind. That's why I like the teachings of Epicureanism on how to cultivate a good life: they are tangible and "real", not based on some abstraction or transcendence. Sensations are here and now, being way more reliable than abstract concepts.