

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

Post by "Pacatus" of November 18, 2024 at 3:33 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

In modern Western culture, this is what happiness means for most people: a fizzy, effervescent quality that many people see as inherently short-lived. "Are you happy?" means, it seems to me, to most people to convey a bubbly, giddy feeling

I disagree (not what I generally mean - even without much reflection). And I disagree that there is (or can be) some non-contextual definition of "happiness" that can be applied except in the most abstract of cases. The same for "pleasure" - really no less problematic than "happiness."

I think the search for some philosophical, context-free precision in such language will always fail - except in the narrow hallways of academia. In this, I continue to follow Wittgenstein's insights on "ordinary language."

With that said, "happiness" and "well-being" (as opposed to "ill-being") are not - to my mind - unrelated. And, as has been discussed many times, that embraces the mental as well as (and maybe even more so than) the physical - e.g., Epicurus on his deathbed.

And, in Epicurean philosophy, "happiness" (and well-being, for that matter) is related to pleasure - the pleasurable/pleasant life. As opposed to, say, Stoic virtue.

[Don](#) , You and I have disagreed on this before. I have thought of *eudaimonia* as "happy well-being." I continue to do so, as I still think they are related. A disagreement *among friends* ❤️ : and one that itself may depend on context.

Oh -- and kudos on the Monty Python reference! 👍😊

I have not addressed "meaning." Another broadly-defined term. And, to my mind, far more fraught than "happiness" - which is something that I *feel*.