

November 2024 General Thoughts On What Epicurean Philosophy Means To Me.

Post by "Cassius" of December 3, 2024 at 9:18 AM

Anothe Facebook exchange in this thread:

Greg Anastasi : This is an excellent thread! I've spent a lot of time looking at Stoicism. And I'm circling around to Epicureanism. so I'm still "getting the vibe".

Cassius:

Welcome Greg!

I suspect you're using "vibe" informally, but it is a good word to think about. Epicurus rejected the idea of there being a "harmony" of the spheres (Lucretius specifically addresses that) because such ideas presume some kind of supernatural creative and guiding force behind the universe. Ultimately and regardless of how the modern stoics try to rebake the cake, Stoicism makes sense only if you take the position that there is an ultimate divine force that justifies the pursuit of "virtue" as the ultimate goal.

That's why I think when you drill down to brass tacks, and you eliminate concerns about the supernatural as Epicurus did, you then realize that everything worth having is going to come to you - if at all - in this life, because there is no other.

One of the most difficult hurdles to overcome is that of seeing that the Stoics and others are misrepresenting Epicurus in accusing him of equating "pleasure" with "sex, drugs, and rock and roll."

Epicurean philosophy is very clear that if you are alive and experiencing anything at all, what you are experiencing should be viewed as either pleasure or pain. That means that all experiences of life which are not explicitly painful fall within the term "pleasure," and that includes everything worthwhile and meaningful in life, not just sensual pleasure, but all the art and literature and wisdom and nobility that the Stoics want to claim for themselves but which they at at same time hold to consider merely preferable or to be indifferent about, all for the sake of the ambiguous word "virtue."

Epicurean philosophy incorporates the benefits of stoicism (including appreciation of calmness of mind and the need for work and exertion and reason-based action) by recognizing that we sometimes choose pain in order to obtain a greater pleasure. In sum, Epicurean philosophy provides what some see as the benefits of stoicism, but explains the reasoning and full analysis properly, in terms of all of the desirable aspects of life as constituting pleasure, which provides

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a sound basis for a complete approach to life that is consistent with a totally natural universe.