

How Would Epicurus Analyze The Slogan "Live Free Or Die" As An Ethical Guide?

Post by "Don" of December 4, 2024 at 11:54 PM

The two stark choices seems a bit limiting to me:

1. Live free
2. Die

Can I live pleasantly living under a dictator? Is there any room for finding pleasure? If so, don't die. But John Stark that penned "Live free or die, death is not the greatest of evils" also wrote in the same letter "As I was then, I am now — The friend of the equal rights of men, of representative Democracy, of Republicanism, and the Declaration of Independence, the great charter of our National rights — and of course the friend of the indissoluble union and constitution of the States. I am the enemy of all foreign influence, for all foreign influence is the influence of tyranny. This is the only chosen spot for liberty — this is the only Republic on earth."

So, we have to answer both Epicurus and John Stark.

In Stark's analysis, I am being asked to put my life on the line for a *cause*? Are there *causes* worth fighting and likely dying over?

Epicureans appear to have survived under absolute rulers (Macedonians, Persians, Romans), so my thought would be they had a different attitude to "equal rights of men, ...Democracy" etc. BUT we do know Epicureans fought to preserve the Republic of Rome (although that certainly didn't adhere to any sense of equality or Democracy).

My first blush response to [Cassius](#) 's question is that living - life itself - is paramount because it is the only way to pursue pleasure. Death is not to be sought (and I'm not even fully convinced that Epicurus allowed suicide, but that's another thread) when the potential for pleasure - even the smallest - is still possible.

It's not an easy question, and there are no simple answers - that's for sure.