

Why isn't "satisfaction" the guide of life?

Post by "Cassius" of December 16, 2024 at 2:45 PM

I'd also observe that in your examples you are referring to medium-term or milestone goals, which will differ from individual to individual. In contrast, on a philosophical level, the generalization that (should) apply to everyone is that their general goal should be "pleasure" or "a pleasurable life."

I continue to think it is best to look at Epicurus in this philosophical way: He's setting up "Pleasure" as against "virtue" or "piety" as general goals. We could go down a long list of "wisdom" or "knowledge" or "satisfaction" or whatever as more precise terms than "virtue," but I would say in Epicurean terms no goal is worth having or guide is worth following unless it aims at "pleasure" as the ultimate good.

Yes Epicurus has some very good practical advice about *how* to pursue pleasure, but the real heavy lifting that I would say most of his writing is focusing on is establishing *that* pleasure is the goal, and the specific recommendations are in support of the goal of showing that pleasure is achievable and reasonable to be the goal.

Not saying that you are Julia, but I think it's a significant problem that many people are reading their own definition into Epicurus' view of pleasure, and then taking him to be telling them how to achieve their own limited goals. In contrast, Epicurus didn't take for granted that pleasure is the goal, and many of his specific statements about pleasure can easily be misapplied (as do those who practice asceticism) if they think that his explanation of the general goal is specifically applicable to what they themselves think is "pleasure."