

Welcome EdGenX

Post by "Cassius" of December 8, 2025 at 3:33 PM

Epicurus vs Pythagoras - Again, I think this one's good, as it focuses on the deepest issue of whether there is a supernatural structure to life. As in the first video I personally don't approve of saying that Epicurus promotes "simple pleasures." He's very clear that what he promotes is pleasure, and issue is not whether the pleasure is simple but whether the activity produces more pleasure than pain. You'll find that's an important issue to study, EdGenX, but any differences of opinion on that fade in comparison to the areas where most of us fully agree and what Epicurus taught was absolutely clear: (1) There are no supernatural gods, and (2) We do not have immortal souls which survive death.

After we're clear on those two points it's up to each individual to choose what pleasures they want to pursue and how much pain they are willing to obtain those pleasures. Some people may indeed want to go exclusively for pleasures that they deem to be simple, but that's not the way Epicurus expresses it. Yes there are lots of reasons to think that pursuing pleasures well within your means is often the best way to obtain more pleasure than pain, but that's not an absolute and ironclad rule, and to think that it is an absolute and ironclad rule betrays a major misunderstanding of Epicurus. There are no absolute ironclad rules and nature has given us only pleasure and pain as guidance on what to choose and what to avoid.

Letter to Menoeceus:

[126] But the many at one moment shun death as the greatest of evils, at another (yearn for it) as a respite from the (evils) in life. (But the wise man neither seeks to escape life) nor fears the cessation of life, for neither does life offend him nor does the absence of life seem to be any evil. *And just as with food he does not seek simply the larger share and nothing else, but rather the most pleasant, so he seeks to enjoy not the longest period of time, but the most pleasant.*

In this context it's essential also to understand that Epicurus did not limit the meaning of "pleasure" to those of the body. Pleasures of the mind - all the emotional attachments we find valuable in life, are just as important or more so. There are even times when we will give up life itself for a friend if that seems to be the better course. The issue of the meaning of "pleasure" is huge but that's something that isn't mentioned in the videos so best for another post later.

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