

Is There A "Paradox of Hedonism"?

Post by "Cassius" of April 4, 2026 at 4:40 PM

It occurs to me to add here that in some of our physics discussions recently we have had reason to focus on the importance of "emergence" or "emergent qualities" to the nature of the way things are.

Probably friendship and love and the issues you are talking about have an analogy there.

At the beginning of any relationship there are simple and direct interactions, but over time those deepen and expand and something emerges that is far different from what was present at the beginning.

For example there's a world of difference between buying a hamburger at a counter and living together for decades, raising a family, etc. And yet the latter type of relationship can emerge from the former, and it is completely proper to consider both of relationships as true and real and proper, and in no way is one less real or conflicting with the other.

This entire issue of emergence is the path by which we escape the false idea of intelligent design, arbitrary gods, and eternal punishment after death. i don't know that we have record of it being applied in exactly that way but it would be surprising if this example of pleasure weren't related to the way Epicurus analyzed the universe as a whole -- as emerging from simpler starting points.