

Pleasure vs Happiness (?) Discussion of Hiram's "In Defense of Eudaimonia"

Post by "Cassius" of October 21, 2019 at 10:32 AM

Aside: I think we are seeing close-up the hazards that arise from not taking the DeWitt approach and pointing out early and often how Epicurus was in revolt against his predecessors, and how the war with Stoicism was very real.

A lot of people seem to think that Epicurus was right in line with the rest of the Greeks and just decided to embrace atomism and applied a word twist on pleasure/absence of pain - but that otherwise he was substantially similar. And that's where a lot of this Stoicism-love comes from that we see so often among people who come to the forums for the first time.

What I am calling the DeWitt approach was to point out how profoundly Epicurus was rejecting Platonism, and that includes Aristotle before Epicurus and the Stoics afterwards.

It's hard for us today to appreciate the depth of that difference because most of us are not well versed in Plato (especially [Philebus](#)) or the details of Aristotle on the meaning of "happiness."

But it's worse than that we are not well versed. The truth is the modern world, religious AND secular, has fully embraced the heart of the non-Epicurean viewpoint, and they recognize that it is an enemy that they think needs to be stamped out, so they demonize discussion of "pleasure" and the Epicurean view of non-absolute virtues. I think most of us sense that that is how they play their mind-control games, because they know that the Epicurean view strikes at the heart of their intellectual and civil power structure. That means we face more than just educating ourselves about the ancient context and determining what Epicurus meant.

It means that at the end of the day, when we find out what Epicurus really did mean, we are going to find that we are a very small minority in a very hostile world, and that we had better stick together on core issues if we ever hope to be more than isolated gnats waiting to be swatted by the organized opposition,