

The Difference Between Happiness and Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of January 13, 2018 at 9:02 PM

Exactly Brett. THAT is why there are no hard and fast examples listed in the text. In many cases, what at one moment is a desirable choice is at the next moment deadly, and that is as it has to be since there is no master supernatural force coordinating events., and events are constantly changing.

When I was in school I was under the spell of Cicero's personal Platonic-inspired viewpoints, and back then i first ran into a well known passage in Cicero's "Republic" about [TRUE LAW](#): (link to my post on this)

"True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrong-doing by its prohibitions. And it does not lay its commands or prohibitions upon good men in vain, although neither have any effect on the wicked. It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to attempt to repeal a part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by Senate or People, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. **And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times,** and there will be one master and ruler, that is, God, over us all, for He is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst penalties, even if he escapes what is commonly called punishment .” . . .” — Marcus Tullius Cicero, Republic, The Laws, 59 - 47 B.C.

I used to swear by this passage, and now I see it is ****completely wrong.**** 😊

That's why the PD's on Justice read as they do - there is no ONE SIZE FITS ALL set of ethical standards that are higher than the practical guidance of pleasure and pain under the circumstances then and there existing. People don't seem to talk much about those last 10 PDs and I think that is why.

People are nowadays (some of them anyway) used to the idea that in questions of personal discretion and morality that decisions have to be evaluated by circumstances. But that applies not only to whether you like vanilla vs chocolate, and whether the first scoop is good and the 200th at one sitting kills you, it applies to every question of justice and social organization as well. That's a tough thing to accept, but Epicurus followed it through to the conclusion that is logical.

Everyone has their pet political and moral issues, and I do too, but for purposes of promoting Epicurean philosophy I think it's necessary to see that there's no "one size fits all" in any of these questions other than that each person is programmed by nature to make their own calculation of pleasure and pain, and we all have to realize that and act accordingly.