

Glossary - What is the Epicurean Definition of "Pleasure?"

Post by "Cassius" of January 15, 2020 at 1:43 PM

[Quote from Oscar](#)

Can you clarify the difference between happiness and pleasure.

That is exactly the point under discussion and it is not easy. What is clear is that (1) Epicurus stated that "pleasure" (using hedone or other Greek words) is the goal, not "happiness" (eudaimonia). Perhaps we should ask the Greeks what the difference is 😊 For now, the main point for philosophical discussion is that pleasure is a feeling, and happiness would be desirable because it is a type of pleasurable feeling, otherwise happiness would not be desirable. I do not think it would be appropriate to do the reverse, and describe pleasure as a type of happiness feeling. Nor would it be appropriate to attempt to define happiness as an abstraction which is the single goal of everyone's life, as Aristotle tried to do by defining precise requirements for happiness. Nature gave us only feelings to help us determine how to choose and to avoid, and did not define particular goals or give faculties other than pleasure and pain.

[Quote from Oscar](#)

It seems a lot of people are seeking happiness, how would you convince them that happiness is not the goal of life, that pleasure is the ultimate goal/chief good in life?

Same answer as above, for the moment: Pleasure is a feeling, and happiness would be desirable because it is a type of pleasurable feeling, otherwise happiness would not be desirable. I do not think it would be appropriate to do the reverse, and describe pleasure as a type of happiness feeling. Nor would it be appropriate to attempt to define happiness as an abstraction which is the single goal of everyone's life, as Aristotle tried to do by defining precise requirements for happiness.

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