

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

Post by "Elli" of January 18, 2020 at 5:49 AM

Cassius said : These are excellent examples of citations to eudaimonia, Elli. It is interesting to think about how it is we might be able to rival Zeus in eudaimonia, which is based on pleasure, rather than saying that we might rival Zeus in pleasure itself.

What do you think about that - was Epicurus intending to make that distinction?

There is not a distinction actually but a description with the usage of such terms that are based on gradations of nuance among the feelings of pleasure and pain, as it is the grey color among black and white since there are "measurements" (with thoughts and actions) of a whole life that have to be done by us, and as long as this life lasts. And that is because in our life there are the **distractions/obstacles with some painful situations**, and these obstacles **are NOT OUR OPINIONS**, as the stoics claim for leading us to apathy, duty, fate and the goal of an abstract virtue.

For this, we also say that we do not choose a pleasure that leads to a pain, as similarly, we choose and a pain to achieve a greater pleasure. The removal of a painful situation is an unsurpassed joy (that is a description of pleasure too) and this is the nature of the good as Epicurus responds to Aristotelians who were strolling around and about on what is good and what is bad etc etc.

The word "joy" is given in greek language with two words "γῆθος ἢ χαρά" [pron. githos or chara]. Epicurus starts his letters to his friends with the word "χαίρειν" that means "be joyful" which also means "be pleasant". And Metrodorus used the word "joy" in one of the epicurean sayings "do not postpone your joy because you have only one and unique life". The Greek language is rich, and any person in any language, of course, grasps the meaning of words as joy, happy etc that all are synonymous with pleasure. It is not a word game, it is just the power of things whenever and whoever is speaking with words, for all things and issues that are not by themselves, but the power in them is when we bring them into the reality of our life, for making our calculations and for communicating with each other, since we have been evolved and survive as social beings and to communicate with each other with the sounds of words. Lucretius in the Latin language used many-many powerful words in his masterpiece and I think he invented and new terms for the purpose to describe the Nature of all Things.

For Epicurus, as he observed the phenomena and our nature there is not, for him, in a duration of time, an absolute, objective, and perfect pleasure or an absolute, objective and perfect pain.

As, there is not for him an absolute, objective and perfect justice/beauty/honesty etc. For Epicurus there is not any moderation of any golden rule. There are only limits in a procedure for the achievement of the goal of pleasure, as also for him, there are means called as virtues that spring from prudence measured in accordance with the circumstances and consequences of the experiences of the person, as also for Epicurus, there is not a pain or pleasure meter since the limits are due to subjectivity on feelings in accordance with time and space that any human being lives. For this, is not given by him a list on any marble stone on what we should do for living our life pleasantly.

There are some persons that claim deviously accusing Epicurus of living in a cave with bread and water and they make the conclusion that in our era to have a car is unnatural and unnecessary. No, the desire for traveling and visiting other places, unknown and known persons as friends **it is not unnatural and unnecessary desire**. It is a must. It is the enrichment of memories and feelings. As it was the horse in the Epicurus era, now is the car and airplane for traveling. And if we are incapable yet to accumulate the power/energy from our star/sun or air, and we still are fighting each other for the oil for using the means of transportation and the means for cultivation of our food, we do not get under the economical/political orders to eliminate our desires and following the motto of "frugality" for living our life in a cave with bread and water and that's fine. No, we will try with all of our efforts to investigate Nature since the investigation is in our nature, for living like gods among gods. This is **eudaemonia** !

BECAUSE we have to remember and to not forget (this is the word "a+litheia" (true) in greek that means "without oblivion") this again and again: **Every explanation without the core that exists in Epicurean philosophy is something just to talk about since every issue and every term in Epicurean philosophy has a fixed bond with pleasure. For EP every of our choice and avoidance, in our life, serves the pleasure, and it has the pleasure in its foundation i.e. inside its core. If you follow false philosophies, false religions with obsessions, false ideologies with -isms, false mainstreams, false economical, sociological, psychological theories, it is sure that you will end up compromised, subordinated and manipulated, so then the pleasure is lost, as well as your study in Nature and Epicurean Philosophy loses its core and disappears too. So, when someone confuses things and issues with the study of EP that is a whole, he has not to say for himself that is an epicurean, he is something else that pretends that he is an epicurean.** 🤔