

Characteristics of the Wise Man, 1-9 Rough Draft of Outline

Post by "Don" of May 31, 2020 at 10:48 AM

It seems to me we're all on the right track moving in the same direction, maybe just in different lanes.

I agree with [Cassius](#) that there is no objective standard to judge one pleasure more pleasurable than another. Pleasure by its very nature is subjective.

Both [Godfrey](#) and I have mentioned the "pursuit." According to Attalus's website, Fragment 68 is from the following:

Quote

Plutarch, *That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible*, 4, p. 1089D: It is this, I believe, that has driven them, seeing for themselves the absurdities to which they were reduced, to take refuge in the "painlessness" and the "stable condition of the flesh," supposing that the pleasurable life is found in thinking of this state as about to occur in people or as being achieved; for the "stable and settled condition of the flesh," and the "trustworthy expectation" of this condition contain, they say, the highest and the most assured delight for men who are able to reflect. Now to begin with, observe their conduct here, how they keep decanting this "pleasure" or "painlessness" or "stable condition" of theirs back and forth, from body to mind and then once more from mind to body.

Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, IX.5.2: Epicurus makes pleasure the highest good but defines it as *sarkos eustathes katastema*, or "a well-balanced condition of the body."

So, Plutarch says Epicureans say that the "pleasurable life is found in **thinking of this state as about to occur** in people or **as being achieved.**" This again emphasizes the process. It also echoes what Epicurus said about how important it is to remember past pleasures and look forward to future pleasures. We cannot have guarantees or assurances of stable health, but we can make choices that moved us in that direction. We can look forward to those future pleasures of stable health. We can be assured that we ourselves will make choices to move ourselves forward **toward** stable health (aponia) and peace of mind (ataraxia). I'm not advocating a "tranquillist" perspective but just talking about a process and attributes growing out of that process when we're making choices about what gives us pleasure in the future and the present.

Take Plutarch again:

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1581-characteristics-of-the-wise-man-1-9-rough-draft-of-outline/?postID=7856#post7856>

Quote

the good is a thing that arises out of your very escape from evil and from your memory and reflection and gratitude that this has happened to you.

From my perspective, one key word is "arises." This again implies a process.

I think there's a difference between talking about maximizing pleasure in our lives over time in the present and the future and talking about maximum pleasure of any one pleasurable event. The latter can't be measured by definition because we're talking about subjective phenomena.

This conversation is both very pleasurable for me as well as enlightening. Keep it coming!