

Welcome Camotero!

Post by "Cassius" of June 12, 2020 at 5:17 AM

"It's unappealing that it may be perceived as a selfish way to live life and act in the world. It worries me that the ethics won't comprise a care for the less fortunate and the downtrodden. Or that morality would be not relevant to it because of its ultra materialistic foundatwher"

Martin has addressed this well but I bet he and all of us think there is much more to say. The point he raised is I think one of the best. You identify concern for the downtrodden as a source of worry for you which means a source of pain to you. In Epicurean philosophy you must address that pain or you will not achieve the most pleasure / least pain that I'd possible to you. And Epicurus does not suggest suppressing or trying to "will" the pain to go away, as a Stoic might. So in that sense Epicurean philosophy is a stronger and more realistic way to understand why we are motivated to take social actions.

Unfortunately this is going to be one area where we just have to think for ourselves, read the text closely, and accept that we think that those who interpret Epicurus as a shirker / passivist / isolationist / etc are simply wrong in their interpretations of the philosophy. And that takes strength and courage to stand apart from the academic consensus.

As for the relevance of Epicurus being limited by its basis in materialism, that goes back to the discussion of abstractions above which I hope we are beginning to address. Being realistic about the atomic nature of the universe does not mean that we are at war with abstractions or feeling or emotions or mental aspects whatsoever.

I always think back to that line in ON ENDS where Torquatus explicitly says that Epicurus held that mental pain and pleasure are frequently more significant to us than "bodily" pains and pleasures. Since that is true, we must act to address sources of pain and pleasure in abstractions just as much (or more) as pleasures or pains that address our hands or feet or any "bodily" part of us.