

"Facts don't care about your feelings."

Post by "Cassius" of November 6, 2020 at 9:07 PM

Godfrey's response is in my view 100% correct, but in addition:

[Quote from Don](#)

So, Epicurus says it's alright to use reason, right? We shouldn't rely on it to rationalize and come up with "ideal" absolutes, but we can use it to assimilate the information from our canonical senses.

Oh My Gosh Yes!!!! What other reading can be given to sayings like these which stress reason and science:

Quote

12. A man cannot dispel his fear about the most important matters if he does not know what is the nature of the universe, but suspects the truth of some mythical story. So that, without natural science, it is not possible to attain our pleasures unalloyed.

13. There is no profit in securing protection in relation to men, if things above, and things beneath the earth, and indeed all in the boundless universe, remain matters of suspicion.

16. In but few things chance hinders a wise man, but the greatest and most important matters, reason has ordained, and throughout the whole period of life does and will ordain.

It would probably be helpful to think about what it is that might ever cause you to question that!

What I am beginning to suspect to be the case (and I am not just talking about you) is that people today are so conditioned to treat "science" and "reason" as "absolute" that they get uncomfortable with any suggestion that they themselves (science and reason) have limits which much be accounted for.

I am currently trying to finish editing the most recent podcast and we talk about the issue that some people are just never going to accept their lack of "certainty" and this bothers some people more than it does others. For some number or people no amount of data is ever going to be sufficient, while some others seem to be more willing to accept "probabilities" without being anxious about the lack of "certainty."

Sometimes that difference between people may relate to something clinical in them that amounts to a pathology of some kind, but I don't think that everyone who is bothered by lack of certainty is by any means subject to pathology. I think that there are very real and reasonable questions that have to be answered here, and as usual they come back to "limits and boundaries" that we have to wrestle with in our own minds.

"Science" and "reason" do not exist in the air - they are creations of human beings and they have natural limits and boundaries that exist due to our human nature as finite beings. We're NEVER going to know all we would like to know, and that means that "science" and "reason" are always going to have limits which is unfair to ask them to try to handle. You haven't ever died before, and so there is no way you can have the assurance of saying "i've been there so i KNOW that there is no life after death." You haven't been to every corner of the universe, and you never will, so you'll never be able to say that you "know from experience" what lurks there. "Science" and "reason" are creations of humanity and have the same limits we have.

We can choose to say that "I am a pragmatist and I accept that statistics-based evidence of all past experience pointing in one direction is satisfactory to me, and I don't worry about it any further than that." But even that statement is based (at best) on "consensus" after experience (testing) in which you choose for yourself whose test results to trust and whose not to trust. Decisions on what is reliable to trust and what is not reliable to trust in the big questions of life cannot ever reasonably be based 100% on "I observed it for myself," because no one here has been alive except for a short period of time. The question of what evidence to accept can only be answered by philosophy, and that is where Epicurus points for the answer to the question. An absolute attitude of faith in human "Reason" or "Logic" or "Science," which simply cannot bear the burden which we are trying to place on them if we look to them as the equivalent of a supernatural god.

Supernatural gods don't exist, and neither does deified "Reason" or "Science." All we can do is be "prudence" in evaluating the evidence that we can gather. And that means subjecting EVERY input from ALL of the legs of the canon to the same scrutiny before we reach final opinions as to what is true. We may think we see a purple elephant in front of us, but we train ourselves to look again and again, from different perspectives, until we are sure, and the same goes for feelings of pleasure and pain, and the same goes for any data we receive through "anticipations." We accept for the moment that the data is honestly reported, but we never accept that what we experience at one moment is expected to be experienced in any future moment until we have tested each experience over time and found it to be repeatedly reliable. I choose to call that the foundation of all "reason" and "science" even though I am also accepting the fact that that data I am receiving through these three legs of my canonical faculties is subject to distortion and is necessarily far more limited than I would prefer it to be. It's ALL I have on which I can prudently decide what to be confident in and what not to be confident in.