

On The Relationship of Eudaemonia And Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of July 10, 2019 at 7:02 AM

Here is an excellent post by Elli with which I completely agree. I post it here to call attention to the part that I have underlined:

Quote

The term of determinism denotes humans' irresistible desire to have something stable to feel secure, but it is the same issue that hides behind the fate, necessity, god, and the absolutes. The term of indeterminism denotes the instability and leads to chance, randomness and chaos that makes us, the humans, to not feel secure at all. It is an issue how we feel and judge the first causes of the phenomena that caused them in the materialistic reality. The idea by Protagoras that "Man is the measure of all things" it is in consistency with the field of existensial psychology. It leads to the responsibility that we the humans are capable enough to do such actions to eliminate the obstacles that are against to our goal of pleasure, because we know for sure that the only we have is a unique life to live it in eudaemonia.

Imo Epicurus neither is a determinist nor an indeterminist, he is a probabilist. He measures the things in consistency with Physics, Canon and Ethics to eliminate as much as he can those probabilities that are obstacles to our goal of pleasure. The only obvious stability for Epicurus is pleasure that is a faculty to us by Nature, as he also declares when we do not have in our life eudeaemonia we do everything to win it. For doing everything to win eudaemonia springs from the inner self that has the ability to visionalize and his future without to be afraid of it, because he knows what is happened to the past and what is happening to the present. For this reason the children the most important that are offering to us is the joy of present that is connected mostly with the future. For a society to loose its children it is like to loose its future. Something that happens to my country in the financial crisis as we abandon all of our hopes of the future by abandoning our children for leaving away from our society and welcoming children from other societies. This does not lead to the coherence and the future of a society. This does not lead to social contracts with fair laws that can be accepted by the like. Sorry, but I know what is happening around me. The immigration issue leads to chaos as it is an issue without control and without ending. As well as, the issue of banking financial system leads to chaos as the monetary system became a gambling, and has nothing to do with the past that there was a kind of a control and stability as it was connected with the gold.

So, the only solution that comes in our sight again and again is elimination of the desires and the absence of pain (feelings) to lead people of our societies to apathy and misery for accepting an inexorable determinism of our fate. No, this is a miserable slavery.

However, the inner self for Epicurus measures according to the past, the present and an expectation of future experiences and how many trusted friends has around for not feeling lonely and insecure, and for the present and for the future. To have real friends, means you have allies in life for feeling strong enough to fight against all the obstacles and these probabilities that are against to the survival of your common society. But for having friends it is an issue how to realize what friendship is, Epicurus said that is an immortal good. Today this great value has a value of a dime.

For the issue on future here is how Epicurus points out it in his letter to Meneceus : We must then bear in mind that the future is neither ours, nor yet wholly not ours, so that we may not altogether expect it as sure to come, nor abandon hope of it, as if it will certainly not come.

I agree with everything Elli wrote there but I want to comment on the phrasing of this part:

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In the underlined section, note the switch from referring to pleasure to referring to eudaemonia.

Compare that to this part of Diogenes of Oinoanda:


Quote

"If, gentlemen, the point at issue between these people and us involved inquiry into «what is the means of happiness?» and they wanted to say «the virtues» (which would actually be true), it would be unnecessary to take any other step than to agree with them about this, without more ado. But since, as I say, the issue is not «what is the means of happiness?» but «what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?», I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life...."

Yes I know that eudaimonia / happiness were terms used by Epicurus himself in addition to "pleasure" but the point I would make is that without clearly tying happiness to pleasure, the implication creeps in (and is fully entrenched in modern society) that "happiness" is not necessarily related to pleasure at all, and that indeed pleasure gets in the way of happiness.

I think this is a huge communication issue that we constantly need to address. If we don't, all our discussions fall on ears that are worse than deaf -- ears that are programmed by opposing

philosophies and religions to disparage pleasure. And maybe even worse, our words are used differently than

A man with dark hair and a white shirt is shouting into a large black megaphone. The background is a light green gradient.

But the issue is not, "what is the means of happiness" ?
The issue is, "what is happiness" ?
Or, in other words, "What is the ultimate goal of our nature" ?

I say both now, and always, shouting out loudly, to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the highest end of life !

The virtues, which are turned upside down by other philosophers, who transfer the virtues from "the means" to "the end", are in no way the end in themselves ! The virtues are not ends in themselves, but only the means to the end that Nature has set for us !

This we affirm to be true in the strongest possible terms, and we take it as our starting point for how men should live.

From Diogenes of Oinoanda INSCRIPTION EIII 23/05/15