

The "No Need For Nihilism" Proof

Post by "Cassius" of October 26, 2021 at 5:07 PM

This is one of those "passing thought" posts and not intended to be particularly profound:

In opening the EpicureanFriends home page today and once again rereading the summary of the life that "will not admit of future improvement," it occurs to me that (in addition to serving other purposes) this might be thought of as the "No Need For Nihilism Proof":

Quote

One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity.

When the worst that can happen to us is seen to not to really be so bad at all, isn't that good reason to reject nihilism (and fears of all kinds) and get on with the business of enjoying living?

Considering this along with some of our other recent discussions, maybe this passage could be thought of as an "observation-based" rejection of nihilism that doesn't rely on elaborate "logical" argument.

For example, Epicurus' proof that pleasure is the good was not based on elaborate argument but amounts to: "Look over there at the young of all species and how they act before anyone has had the chance to corrupt them. They pursue pleasure!"

In this case, the proof that there is no need for nihilism and fear amounts to something like: "Look over there, the worst that can happen to you really isn't so bad at all. No unbearably severe pain lasts for very long, so don't give up on life or be afraid, you can handle anything bad that happens to you!."