

The Meaning of Eudaemonia - "Good Demon"

Post by "Cassius" of January 22, 2018 at 9:56 AM

XXXIII.(33) Σαρκὸς φωνὴ τὸ μὴ πεινῆν, τὸ μὴ διψῆν, τὸ μὴ ῥίγουν ταῦτά γὰρ ἔχων τις καὶ ἐλπίζων ἔξειν κἀν <Δία> ὑπὲρ εὐδαιμονίας μαχέσαστο.

Η φωνή του σώματος είναι το να μην πεινά, να μη διψά, να μην κρυώνει, διότι όταν κάποιος αυτά τα έχει και ελπίζει ότι θα τα έχει, μπορεί να συ-ναγωνιστεί και το Δία υπέρ της εὐδαιμονίας.

αποδ. Ἑλλη Πένσα

ογιστέον δὲ ὡς τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσι φυσικαί, αἱ δὲ κεν-
υσικῶν αἱ μὲν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ φυσικαὶ μόνον· τῶν δ' ἀναγκα-
ρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ

122 "Μῆτε νέος τις ὦν μελλέτω φιλοσοφεῖν, μῆτε γέρον ὑπάρχων κοπι-
άτω φιλοσοφῶν· οὔτε γὰρ ἄωρος οὐδεὶς ἐσπιν οὔτε πάρωρος πρὸς τὸ
κατὰ ψυχὴν ὑγιαίνειν. ὁ δὲ λέγων ἢ μήπω τοῦ φιλοσοφεῖν ὑπάρχειν
ᾧραν ἢ παρελη-λυθέναι τὴν ᾧραν ὁμοίος ἐστί τῷ λέγοντι πρὸς εὐδαιμο-
νίαν ἢ μὴ παρεῖναι τὴν ᾧραν ἢ μηκέτι εἶναι. ὥστε φιλοσοφητέον καὶ νέῳ
καὶ γέροντι· τῷ μὲν ὅπως προάσκειν μετέξῃ τοῖς ἀσθεσι· διὰ τοῦ γένου

some of the comments will be

CassiusE THANK YOU! So in Epicurus himself there are two references in the letter to Menoecus, and then in Doctrine 33? Is that a complete list from what we would consider Epicurus himself? Meaning it does not appear in the other letters, or in the other doctrines, or the Vatican sayings? I would eventually like to find the line and page numbers in this Bailey edition so I can put together a full list which shows both the English and Greek: <https://archive.org/.../Epicurus-the-Extant-Remains...Manage>

E: Eudeamonia is happiness which cannot be augmented.2

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CassiusGood point! "Happiness" in general does not imply that it cannot be augmented.

Eudaemonia cannot be augmented, and it is the best described word than the word "happiness" or in greek "eutychia" since the word happiness depends on many outer factors, as its meaning is connected with the word "fortune" and as Epicurus explains here : "He believes that the misfortune of the wise is better than the prosperity of the fool. [135] It is better, in short, that what is well judged in action should not owe its successful issue to the aid of chance".

Here is the description of an epicurean man and how he has achieved "eudaemonia" in his life!

[133] "Who, then, is superior in thy judgement to such a man ? He holds a holy belief concerning the gods, and is altogether free from the fear of death. He has diligently considered the end fixed by nature, and understands how easily the limit of good things can be reached and attained, and how either the duration or the intensity of evils is but slight. Destiny, which some introduce as sovereign over all things, he laughs to scorn, affirming rather that some things happen of necessity, others by chance, others through our own agency. For he sees that necessity destroys responsibility and that chance or fortune is inconstant ; whereas our own actions are free, and it is to them that praise and blame naturally attach. [134] It were better, indeed, to accept the legends of the gods than to bow beneath that yoke of destiny which the natural philosophers have imposed. The one holds out some faint hope that we may escape if we honour the gods, while the necessity of the naturalists is deaf to all entreaties. Nor does he hold chance to be a god, as the world in general does, for in the acts of a god there is no disorder ; nor to be a cause, though an uncertain one, for he believes that no good or evil is dispensed by chance to men so as to make life blessed, though it supplies the starting-point of great good and great evil. He believes that the misfortune of the wise is better than the prosperity of the fool. [135] It is better, in short, that what is well judged in action should not owe its successful issue to the aid of chance.³

This word has been rejected, as it comes from the ancient greeks who were pagans and they worshiped those statues that were not gods but daemons.

So, this word EU+DAEMON+IA has already something evil inside and has to be rejected from the vocabulary of greeks and non greeks.

The worse DAEMON of all was the god PAN. Pan became the devil.²

AR Yes. Christians have rejected it. We have not rejected it.²

AR Now Diogenes says this:

although pleasure is the first and a natural good, for this same reason we do not choose every pleasure whatsoever, but at many times we pass over certain pleasures, when difficulty is likely to ensue from choosing them.

CassiusOK here is my comment, so E you correct me: If Eudaemonia literally means "good demon" then Epicurus and the Greeks of the time were using the word "figuratively" as you say for the "highest what" - because Epicurus didn't believe in demons. Above you wrote: "Eudeaemonia is happiness which cannot be augmented." To some extent that is circular, if we don't know the meaning of "happiness."

We know the meaning of Pleasure without being told. I don't think we know the meaning of happiness without it being defined. That's why pleasure, and not happiness, is the guide of life.

I like the word eudaemonia and think we should use it in context, but we probably need a detailed definition of how and why it is being used and why we would not in English simply say "happiness."

I continue to think that we should translate ALL words, giving detailed definitions, so that no one is left with the idea that we have a mystical idea that cannot be translated (which is exactly the situation I think the world is in with "ataraxia")

Manage

Cassius Amicus

CassiusLet me emphasize that last point. I think it is imperative that we always translate all words and state a precise definition, even if we use the Greek in shorthand. For the non-Greeks using the word in casual conversation is probably not a good idea, especially with new people who don't know the meaning and who think therefore that we are talking in secret code. I hate secret codes.

...

So there Torquatus is summarizing the goal in one sentence: "Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain. (What possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable?)

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Post by "Hiram" of January 22, 2018 at 10:50 AM

eu = good, daimon = spirit; we still use this word in English when we say someone is "in good spirits", and in Spanish when we say "de buen ánimo" (meaning the exact same thing, and the word ánimo comes from Latin "anima"). The word "animarse" is to become animated, to (re)gain the will to live and the strength to fight one's battles, so cancer patients often gain

their "ánimo" in Spanish after they recover.

And when you greet somebody in Spanish saying "ánimo!", you're basically saying "be strong, have vitality, be a fighter, you can win". So these are the connotations of the words that are cognates to "eudaimonia" in modern languages.