

VS33 - Exactly How Is The Man Described In VS33 Rivaling Zeus?

Post by “Cassius” of October 4, 2023 at 9:58 PM

In tonight's zoom we discussed Vatican Saying 33 with a focus on this question:

Is the man being described rivaling Zeus purely because he is not hungry, thirsty, and cold (and confident that he will stay that way) or is it because such physical stability then allows his mind free reign to study nature, talk with friends, and/or do all the other pleasurable activities that a mind is able to do?

In other words, is the "happiness" being generated purely from the satisfaction of having these physical needs secured now and for the future? Or is something else part of the picture? If so, what else, and what does that tell us?

One text that may be on point comes from Lucretius, near the beginning of Book Two:

Quote

Ah! miserable minds of men, blind hearts! in what darkness of life, in what great dangers ye spend this little span of years! To think that ye should not see that nature cries aloud for nothing else but that pain may be kept far sundered from the body, and that, withdrawn from care and fear, she may enjoy in mind the sense of pleasure!

[2::20] And so we see that for the body's nature but few things at all are needful, even such as can take away pain. Yea, though pleasantly enough from time to time they can prepare for us in many ways a lap of luxury, yet nature herself feels no loss, if there are not golden images of youths about the halls, grasping fiery torches in their right hands, that light may be supplied to banquets at night, if the house does not glow with silver or gleam with gold, nor do fretted and gilded ceilings re-echo to the lute. And yet, for all this, men lie in friendly groups on the soft grass near some stream of water under the branches of a tall tree, and at no great cost delightfully refresh their bodies, above all when the weather smiles on them, and the season of the year bestrews the green grass with flowers. Nor do fiery fevers more quickly quit the body, if you toss on broidered pictures and blushing purple, than if you must lie on the poor man's plaid.

[2::37] Wherefore since in our body riches are of no profit, nor high birth nor the glories of kingship, for the rest, we must believe that they avail nothing for the mind as well; unless perchance, when you see your legions swarming over the spaces of the Campus, and provoking a mimic war, strengthened with hosts in reserve and forces of cavalry, when you draw them up equipped with arms, all alike eager for the fray, when you see

the army wandering far and wide in busy haste, then alarmed by all this the scruples of religion fly in panic from your mind, or that the dread of death leaves your heart empty and free from care. But if we see that these thoughts are mere mirth and mockery, and in very truth the fears of men and the cares that dog them fear not the clash of arms nor the weapons of war, but pass boldly among kings and lords of the world, nor dread the glitter that comes from gold nor the bright sheen of the purple robe, can you doubt that all such power belongs to reason alone, above all when the whole of life is but a struggle in darkness?

Of course I have an opinion on this but I would like to hear what others think.