

Nietzsche Channeling Epicurus "Never Losing One's Own Way," and How To Proceed With Philosophical Therapy

Post by "Cassius" of December 23, 2018 at 10:13 AM

I think this ("encourages philosophical therapists to prioritize their own self-discovery and cultivation and then, by extension, focus only on kindred souls who they can genuinely understand and help....") is applicable to many of our recent conversations. First from the blog, then the Nietzsche quote:

"A year later in *The Gay Science* Nietzsche returns to this idea and unpacks it more carefully. Pointing out the ways in which the causes and inner logic of a person's suffering are for the most part inaccessible or incomprehensible to others—and thus why pity is an ineffective and even counter-productive response to suffering—he encourages philosophical therapists to prioritize their own self-discovery and cultivation and then, by extension, focus only on kindred souls who they can genuinely understand and help. The primary concern is never to lose "one's own way":

How is it possible to keep to one's own way? Constantly, some clamor or other calls us aside; rarely does our eye behold anything that does not require us to drop our own preoccupation instantly to help. I know, there are a hundred decent and praiseworthy ways of losing my own way, and they are truly highly "moral"! Indeed, those who now preach the morality of pity even take the view that precisely this and only this is moral—to lose one's own way in order to come to the assistance of a neighbor. I know just as certainly that I only need to expose myself to the sight of some genuine distress and I am lost. And if a suffering friend said to me, "Look, I am about to die; please promise to die with me," I should promise it; and the sight of a small mountain tribe fighting for its liberty would persuade me to offer it my hand and my life . . . All such arousing of pity and calling for help is secretly seductive, for our "own way" is too hard and demanding and too remote from the love and gratitude of others, and we do not really mind escaping from it . . . while I shall keep silent [verschweigen, i.e., hide, conceal, keep secret] about some points, I do not want to remain silent about my morality which says to me: Live in seclusion [Lebe im Verborgenen, i.e, live secretly, discreetly, in hiding or concealment] so that you can live for yourself. Live in ignorance about what seems most important to your age. Between yourself and today lay the skin of at least three centuries. And the clamor of today, the noise of wars and revolutions should be a mere murmur for you. You will also wish to help - but only those whose distress you understand entirely

because they share with you one suffering and one hope - your friends - and only in the manner in which you help yourself."

(GS 338)[37]

<http://agonist.nietzschecircle.com/wp/great-polit...-cultivation/3/>

Post by "Cassius" of December 23, 2018 at 10:34 AM

[Elli](#) @ELLI P You are going to help us make some graphic memes of this quote, correct? If ever I found a quote I need to read every day, this is it! 😊

Post by "Cassius" of December 23, 2018 at 11:08 AM

Related thought: What would happen if the world were to all of a sudden agree with Nietzsche/Epicurus, and the entire world saw that "the goal is pleasure" and not false religions and ideals?

It seems to me that having common general goals is a first and necessary step in determining who your friends are. I know you are not suggesting it, but I also think we would be wrong to expect that everyone who shares the goal of "pleasure" is also going to be our "friend."

Since there is no single god or ideal structure enforcing a single view of what everyone is going to find pleasurable, we have to expect that different people and different groups are going to find different things to be pleasurable. We therefore have to anticipate that saying "the goal is pleasure" does not at once erase all conflict between all people.

I don't think anyone here is in danger of asserting that, but I can see confusion over the issue. To convince everyone in the world that "the goal is pleasure" would indeed be a great thing, and no doubt improve the general level of harmony. But at that level of abstraction "the goal is pleasure" and without explanation of the nature of how the faculty the pleasure works (such as we are discussing here), the proposition "the goal is pleasure" can appear to take on a form that is very close to an idealism of its own.

Individuals are individuals first, and in most every case (at least at birth, and until they are corrupted) their loyalty is to themselves and to their family and friends, and not to "humanity"

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/642-nietzsche-channeling-epicurus-never-losing-one-s-own-way-and-how-to-proceed-with/>

as a whole. I have no doubt that if false ideas of religion and abstractions were shown to be false and were abandoned, then people would find it easier to understand each other. But to conclude from that observation that the lions would lie down with the lambs and that all would be peace and brotherly love is probably as false as any other kind of idealism.



AM