Epicurean Worldview, Personal Identity, and Creating Community

Post by “Kalosyni” of January 18, 2022 at 12:17 PM

I've been contemplating why it is that I feel that the Epicurean worldview is so important to me. In the study of Epicureanism, I have found many helpful ideas for how I want to make sense out of my life, and also how to determine what I want more of in my life (and less of) in my life. And yet, I am still in the process of formulating my own personal understanding of what is an "Epicurean worldview".

My childhood experience of growing up in Christianity and going to church shaped my mind and how I see the world. As a young child and young teen, I was fully absorbed into the church and religous beliefs, due to the intense programs that children were placed in. But by age 16, I began questioning my religious understanding of God, and by the age of 17, I could no longer believe in God. After moving out of my parents house, I began the journey of overcoming that strict Christian worldview that I was raised in. Going to college helped a bit, and also along the way I met people who greatly helped to expand my views and challenged me to think outside of "black and white" and "either / or" thinking.

After a number of years of studying all world religions and psychology/self-help, I entered into sole study and practice of Buddhism (for about 10 years). I studied on my own for a time, but then attended several different groups. I then went deeply into Zen Buddhist practice at a Zen temple, but then found it to be unsatisfying for a number of reasons.

So now coming to the study of Epicureanism just this last year (2020), and acknowledging that I have a bit of a "religious" drive within myself, and that I have a drive to find meaning in a complete worldview. I see Epicureanism as having a worldview in which I can organize my thoughts and my desires. On encountering this philosophy, I already had within me the "seeds" of this kind of thinking, so basically the draw for me is that this philosophy already resonates for me. I am not changing myself to fit into anything, much of how I think is already "Epicurean".

Coming from my past experience in Christianity and Buddhism, I see that surrounding oneself with others who have the same worldview can create a feeling of safety, security, and belonging. I acknowledge that I do feel a desire to surround myself with people who share my worldview of Epicureanism, but this is made a bit more difficult by the fact that there are so few Epicureans. The only answer to this is to create a way to share Epicureanism with others, and to build Epicurean community.

Also, when it comes to an internal sense of personal identity, perhaps that is something unique for every person, and the desire or "feeling of need" is at various levels, whether one feels secure or insecure in relation to other people. And this personal identity can affect what one

wants from other people, such as the drive for emotional sharing or emotional closeness, or the drive for belonging and recognition...the desire to see and be seen, and to understand and be understood.

Others here on the forum may feel fine living independently in an Epicurean worldview, and not feel a desire to be surrounded by a community, and I can accept that. But for myself, I feel a great desire to create something, and how and what that will be is still unfolding. I want to call forward the creation of whatever is the most pleasureable and joyful community. And so I want to send out this to see what others think with regard to the Epicurean worldview and creating community?