

Kalosyni's Personal Epicurean Outline

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 3, 2022 at 11:04 AM

Here is a new personal Epicurean outline. I wrote everything just off the top of my head, and some areas still need more study. Also some things are my own ideas (such as the last point at the very end of the outline).

My New Outline of Epicureanism -- November 3, 2022

I. The Life of Epicurus and Flourishing of Epicureanism

- A. His place in history (facts)
- B. He challenged others and was challenged (and was both revered and reviled)
- C. Epicureanism flourished and spread far and wide
- D. Written sources of Epicurean philosophy

II. The Philosophy

A. Cosmology and Natural Physics (World View)

1. A materialist and non-supernatural understanding of the universe.

a. understanding the natural world as arising out of atoms and void and having knowable causes (very similar to our modern scientific understanding of the natural world)

b. there were some of Epicurus' ideas that we know are incorrect now that we have modern science.

2. There are no creator god(s) and god(s) are not involved in the lives of humans. Epicurus' own view of the gods is unclear (if they exist in actuality or in only as objects of dreams).

B. Epistemology/Canonic

C. Ethics

1. Pleasure is the natural innate goal of human (and animal) life

a. We naturally seek out pleasure and naturally seek to avoid pain

b. We can observe this instinct in animals and in babies and young children

c. As we mature learn that at times it is better to forego some pleasures so that we can have even greater pleasures in the future

d. And we learn that sometimes we must endure pains so that we can prevent worse pain, or for the possibility experience pleasure, in the future

2. The Tetrarmakos (attributed to Philodemus)

a. There is no need to fear the gods

- b. There is no need to fear death
- c. What we need to stay alive is readily available
- d. We need not fear pain because strong pain is brief and light pain can be overcome by pleasure. (And also now we have modern medicine/pain medications)

3. Correct Understanding of Justice

- a. since gods are not involved with humans it does not come from god(s)
- b. It does not exist abstractly in a Platonic sense
- c. It is determined by feelings of pleasure/pain and mutual benefit
- d. It is upheld by agreements between humans

4. A Pleasurable and Content Life

1. Pleasure is an enjoyable feeling of the senses
2. Ataraxia is an enjoyable feeling of the soul
3. We make use and enjoy everything that comes our way, but we don't depend upon luxurious foods or lifestyle for pleasure if we don't have the money to buy expensive things
4. There are things beyond possessions which lead to a happy and content life -- correct understanding of the nature of the world, friendship, self-sufficiency, and wise choices and avoidances (these are "natural goods").
5. There are natural needs, which are natural and necessary for life and happiness of the body and soul, and for these we can go out, put effort into, and find fulfillment.
6. There are also human cravings which are based on false opinions and lead to more pain than pleasure -- the desire for power and fame. These can only be eradicated by proper refutation.
 - a. the pursuit of power and fame can require one to forego the natural (instinctual) animal movement toward pleasure and avoidance of pain, and instead adopt an absolutist and "stoic" harshness to accomplish one's goals.
 - b. The natural goods which lead to a pleasurable lifestyle will need to be set aside -- friendship becomes a means to an end and not a pleasure
 - c. self-sufficiency must be set aside to make pacts and obligations with others to "further the cause". Power and fame requires one to be beholden to others to "get ahead".
 - d. It may require the violation of others to get ahead or maintain control, resulting in bad consequences (and causing a life of unhappiness).