

Unpaid_Landlord's personal outline

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Note:- this outline represent my own views, which may not be strictly Epicurean, I am kinda new to all this so feedback and guidance is much appreciated.

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Practicing Epicureanism

The Intent :- The intent should always be practical and relevant, not getting into strange metaphysics for the sake of metaphysics, not philosophising for the sake of intellectual entertainment,

Because Epicurus said, “Vain is the word of philosopher by which no human ills are cured”

He was a immensely practical man and his philosophy should be applied in that spirit

What is the Goal of Epicureanism?

It's Aponia and Atraxia, basically a body free of pain and a mind free of trouble,

The highest pleasure itself is Aponia and Atraxia, the limit of pleasure is reached when we attain it.

Epicurean Metaphysics:-

universe is materialistic, Atoms, void, energy and stuff

The modern science should take precedence over Epicurean metaphysics so far as the goal is to understand the nature of the universe to dispel fears, but Epicurean metaphysics should be also be given due consideration so far as to understand the Epicurean thought and it's implications on the rest of his philosophy.

No afterlife, by soul they mean mind, and it's material just like the rest of the body and hence dissolved into its constituent elements upon death.

Gods exist but don't interfere which as good as saying they don't exist

Epicurean Theory of knowledge:-

Senses are a reliable source of knowledge, No one, no priest, no mystic, no philosopher, No guru of any kind should ever lead you to doubt your own senses and the evidence they present, if you start doubting your senses, the only source of knowledge you have, everything else will fall apart.

The information the senses provide to us is real, and it is impossible for us to possess tranquility and happiness if we accept anything that contradicts the evidence of the senses.

Reason and logic is useful so far it relies on the sensory data, Reason relies on the senses for the accuracy of the conclusions that it reaches, and unless we accept the existence of the objects plainly before our eyes, there is nothing to which our reasoning minds can appeal to prove anything.

In order for your conclusions about the truth to be correct, your reasoning must be based on accurate information about reality. If you base your reasoning on anything other than accurate evidence from the sources provided by Nature (the senses, the pain/pleasure mechanism, and the anticipations) your reasoning will lead you astray.

Likewise, you must be sure to determine with exactness the meaning of each word, so that the chain of your understanding is clear to you. Only with clarity of meaning will each definition demonstrate another, and otherwise the entire exercise becomes mere words.^{xvi} First make sure you have a firm grasp of what is certain, for only then are you ready to turn to the study of things for which the evidence is not immediately perceivable to you.^{xvii}

You must always preserve the integrity of your mind. Never confuse what is certain with what is speculative.

It is crucial to realize that there will be times when you confront things that are new and unknown to you. In these situations, you may never be able to obtain sufficient information to be certain of the truth, and you must be content with identifying explanations that reasonably fit the observable facts. Your goal in such cases is not the vanity of inventing a system that cannot be proven, but in determining reasonable explanations that allow you to live your life and act with confidence, and thereby dismissing unnecessary fears.^{xviii}

Proven and empirically verified scientific facts can be trusted to gain further understanding regarding the world, because as a single individual, it's not possible for your to verify every single thing yourself, but beware that the source of those facts is reliable

Epicurean Ethics (how to live) :-

A crucial part of Epicureanism is cataloguing, organizing, and minding the store of our desires.

Which are divided in three types,

Natural Desires:-

“Some are necessary for happiness and some for freeing the body from troubles and some for life itself.” As Epicurus said

Ex :- Includes all basic human needs like —food, health, drink, clothes, basic life-saving medicine, and shelter.

Also includes some rudimentary understanding of how the world and human psychology work, and Developing Prudence on which we can rely on to make good decisions.

trustworthy Epicurean friends

and cultivating virtues (as a means not an end in itself)

Epicureanism encourages us to that draw the line of “enough” at the edge of the necessary desires, seeing that as the limit that surrounds the ingredients of tranquility.

there are two requirements for satisfaction—having enough and appreciating it as enough. When we have enough, but we fail to appreciate that we have enough, we lack tranquility because we feel unsatisfied.

So gratitude and appreciation for what we have and seeing it as enough for happiness is a key necessary desire as well.

Natural and unnecessary desires :-

(unnecessary for Epicurean happiness and tranquility) :- they are basically fancier version of necessary desires, a luxurious home, expensive food etc.

Epicurean is not opposed to the enjoyment of these kind of desires as long as we have the right epicurean attitude towards them, which is

- 1) not confusing them with necessary desires
- 2) not thinking that consuming them would make us more happier than if we were without them
- 3) being cautious with them.

Unnatural and Unnecessary desires:-

Epicurus thinks that these desires take as their objects things that extend without natural limit—things about which someone might say “you can never have too much.” a consequence of having limitless desire is that you will be perpetually unsatisfied, because there is no point, where there is a limit, a "enough".

They require too much effort to get, also to keep and maintain and easier to lose, basically a great recipe for anxious mind.

Examples:- power, fame, wealth, Immortality etc

More on how to live :-

Pleasure and pain are the guide of life

Use hedonic calculus to make decisions

Practice gratitude

Go out and socialize more, or else it will impossible to make Epicurean friends

Practice virtue

Don't get into vices or do something immoral or illegal (fear of getting caught)

Live unnoticed (unless the circumstances need otherwise, don't chase after attention)

Don't get into politics and useless gossips (without careful deliberations at least)

Read and write Epicurean stuff

Epicurean said “death is nothing to us “ but he also said “think on death”

So always keep in mind these 5 remembrances, not to feel fear but to always remind you that this life is all you have, and to make best use of it :-

I am of the nature to grow old. There is no way to escape growing old.

I am of the nature to have ill health. There is no way to escape ill health.

I am of the nature to die. There is no way to escape death.

All that is dear to me and everyone I love are of the nature to change

My actions are my only true belongings and I can't escape their consequences.

(not a divine law like karma but mental anxiety, the fear of getting caught, the guilt etc)

Memorize the key principles if possible or keep them close at hand.

And a lot more (to be added and updated later).