

The Sayings As To The Wise Man

Post by “Cassius” of April 30, 2015 at 9:22 AM

The Sayings As To The Wise Man (Translated by Cyril Bailey) - Note: this may be split up into separate threads in the future for easier reference.

But before considering it let us explain what he and his followers think about the wise man. Injuries are done by men either through hate or through envy or through contempt, all of which the wise man overcomes by reasoning. When once a man has attained wisdom, he no longer has any tendency contrary to it or willingly pretends that he has. He will be more deeply moved by feelings, but this will not prove an obstacle to wisdom. A man cannot become wise with every kind of physical constitution, nor in every nation.

And even if the wise man be put on the rack, he is happy. Only the wise man will show gratitude, and will constantly speak well of his friends alike in their presence and their absence. Yet when he is on the rack, then he will cry out and lament. The wise man will not have intercourse with any woman with whom the law forbids it, as Diogenes says in his summary of Epicurus' moral teaching. Nor will he punish his slaves, but will rather pity them and forgive any that are deserving. They do not think that the wise man will fall in love, or care about his burial. They hold that love is not sent from heaven, as Diogenes says in his . . . book, nor should the wise man make elegant speeches.

Such are his sentiments on the heavenly phenomena, But concerning the rules of life, and how we ought to choose some things, and avoid others, he writes thus. But first of all, let us go through the opinions which he held, and his disciples held, about the wise man. Sexual intercourse, they say, has never done a man good, and he is lucky if it has not harmed him.

Moreover, the wise man will marry and have children, as Epicurus says in the Problems and in the work On Nature. But he will marry according to the circumstances of his life. He will feel shame in the presence of some persons, and certainly will not insult them in his cups, so Epicurus says in the Symposium. Nor will he take part in public life, as he says in the first book On Lives. Nor will he act the tyrant, or live like the Cynics, as he writes in the second book On Lives. Nor will he beg. Moreover, even if he is deprived of his eyesight, he will not end his whole life, as he says in the same work.

Also, the wise man will feel grief, as Diogenes says in the fifth book of the Miscellanies. He will engage in lawsuits and will leave writings behind him, but will not deliver speeches on public occasions. He will be careful of his possessions and will provide for the future. He will be fond of the country. He will face fortune and never desert a friend. He will be careful of his reputation in so far as to prevent himself from being despised. He will care more than other men for public

spectacles. He will erect statues of others, but whether he had one himself or not, he would be indifferent. Only the Wise man could discourse rightly on music and poetry, but in practice he would not compose poems. One wise man is not wiser than another. He will be ready to make money, but only when he is in straits and by means of his philosophy. He will pay court to a king, if occasion demands. He will rejoice at another's misfortunes, but only for his correction. And he will gather together a school, but never so as to become a popular leader. He will give lectures in public, but never unless asked; he will give definite teaching and not profess doubt. In his sleep he will be as he is awake, and on occasion he will even die for a friend.

They hold that faults are not all of equal gravity, that health is a blessing to some, but indifferent to others, that courage does not come by nature, but by a calculation of advantage. That friendship too has practical needs as its motive: one must indeed lay its foundations (for we sow the ground too for the sake of crops), but it is formed and maintained by means of community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure. They say also that there are two ideas of happiness, complete happiness, such as belongs to a god, which admits of no increase, and the happiness which is concerned with the addition and subtraction of pleasures.

Post by “Kalosyni” of August 19, 2023 at 9:11 PM

Break-out of the items from the above section:

1. Injuries are done among men either because of hatred, envy, or contempt, all which the wise man overcomes by reason
2. When once a man has attained wisdom he no longer has any contrary tendency to it, nor does he willingly pretend that he has. He will be more deeply moved by feelings than others, but this will not prove to be an obstacle to wisdom.
3. A man cannot become wise in every kind of physical constitution, or in every nation.
4. Even if the wise man were to be put to torture, he would still be happy.
5. The wise man shows gratitude, and constantly speaks well of his friends whether they present or absent.
6. The wise man will not groan and howl when he is put to the torture.
7. The wise man will not have intercourse with any woman whom the laws forbid, as Diogenes says, in his epitome of the Ethical Maxims of Epicurus.
8. The wise man will not punish his servants, but will rather pity them and forgive any that are deserving.

