

Kalosyni's Personal Epicurean Outline

Post by “Kalosyni” of April 27, 2022 at 6:08 AM

This will be a work in progress, so this is just a rough draft.

My Personal Epicurean Life Philosophy -- April 27, 2022

I understand the existence of everything best as a materialist universe. The notion of God (and all gods) is to be understood only as the idea of a being (or beings) which is (are) blessed and immortal, and they are not involved, able to assist, or influence human beings. God (and all gods) are not supernatural. (This paragraph edit: 01/03/25).

I reflect on this materialist universe through the modern scientific understanding of the nature of the cosmos.

Whatever appears or feels like a spirit or soul within me will cease to exist when I die. The sense of self and consciousness depends on a physical body in order to be experienced. Also, there is no heaven or hell after death, but only the dissolution of consciousness as the bodily processes cease to function.

My personal goal in life is finding enjoyment in the sweetest kind of life. This for me means finding and maintaining friendships with like-minded people who also seek to enjoy the sweetest kind of life. I also strive to improve my ability to be a good friend to others, for the sake of mutual enjoyment.

The sweetest kind of life comes about with both action and non-action -- diligently striving at times toward goals, but at other times surrendering or finding solace in stillness and quietude. I am able to find a sense of engagement, flow, and ease through various personal creative projects.

The sweetest kind of life must be nurtured into being -- this takes effort, but the effort will be felt within myself as well as shared with others. I believe it is very important to cultivate an attitude of optimism, gratitude, joy, and smiles and hugs.

The sweetest kind of life also includes contemplation -- for me this is a combination of study of wisdom, and then pondering how to impliment wisdom. In the past I have studied various wisdom teachings, and now I continue to do so through a primary focus on the study of Epicurean Philosophy, to learn and understand, and also to be able to teach it to others. Out of contemplation comes philosophy for the sake of living the sweetest life.

Post by “Pacatus” of May 2, 2022 at 1:53 PM

"The sweetest kind of life"!!! 😍

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 2, 2022 at 8:11 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

"The sweetest kind of life"!!!

The trick is figuring out how to do it when you don't live in Italy, lol -- "Le dolce vita!"

Spending more time outdoors:



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/Canonics

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 Tetrapharmakos (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 pleasureable 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).
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Post by "Cassius" of November 3, 2022 at 12:02 PM

The thing I really like about the idea of outlining is that it sort of forces you to confront the "how" of how you are organizing thoughts. You have to have a context and a theory in order to make it make sense.

For example I see the term "top-level item" used in outlining to discuss starting points,

In this version, I suppose the top level items would be:

1 - The Life of Epicurus

2 - The Philosophy

So the basic structure is that you're breaking things down into those two categories.

Then under philosophy you have:

A. Cosmology

B. Epistemology

C. Ethics

And then the great weight of the outline is under Ethics as:

1. Pleasure is the natural innate goal of human (and animal) life
2. The Tetrpharmakos
3. Correct Understanding of Justice
4. A Pleasurable and Content Life

With Item 4 being the great weight of that section.

I am just thinking out loud about the process. I wonder if an outline needs a sort of topic sentence forward to describe how it is organized before the organization actually starts. Is the outline: (1) How I Think I Should Live? or (2) The Important Aspects of Epicurus, or (3) What I Would Say To A Friend About Epicurus If I Only Had Five Minutes or something like that.

So we've been talking about this section as "Personal Outlines of Epicurean Philosophy" but maybe that's too broad of a title? What makes sense as a way of putting the goal of the outline out there with clarity?

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 3, 2022 at 12:18 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Is the outline: (1) How I Think I Should Live? or (2) The Important Aspects of Epicurus, or (3) What I Would Say To A Friend About Epicurus If I Only Had Five Minutes or something like that.

For me it is what I think are good points -- and what I would say to a friend. But I still need to flesh out a lot more.

And maybe it would be good if when someone posts an outline that they also say what their goal is.

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 3, 2022 at 3:26 PM

Some further thought:

1. I may have added in a few ideas which are not backed by Epicurean sources, and I need to be clear about what the sources actually say (and what they don't say).
2. I need to be clear if what I wrote is correct.
3. Now in our present time, is this helpful or needed? Will anyone find this useful? What parts of the philosophy are the most helpful or needed?

Post by “Cassius” of November 3, 2022 at 4:05 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Now in our present time, is this helpful or needed? Will anyone find this useful? What parts of the philosophy are the most helpful or needed?

I think the model and purpose is that if YOU find it useful that's the main thing that matters. Yes it helps to see what other people are thinking as a way to check our own thoughts but in the end the whole issue is being able to summon up the key points immediately so as to be able to apply them in moment-by-moment thinking.

[Quote from Letter to Herodotus](#)

[36] Indeed it is necessary to go back on the main principles, and constantly to fix in one's memory enough to give one the most essential comprehension of the truth. And in fact the accurate knowledge of details will be fully discovered, if the general principles in the various departments are thoroughly grasped and borne in mind; for even in the case of one fully initiated the most essential feature in all accurate knowledge is the capacity to make a rapid use of observation and mental apprehension, and this can be done if everything is summed up in elementary principles and formulae. For it is not possible for anyone to abbreviate the complete course through the whole system, if he cannot embrace in his own mind by means of short formulae all that might be set out with accuracy in detail.

Post by “Kalosyni” of December 23, 2022 at 10:52 AM

Gathering my thoughts -- Another Outline - December 23, 2022

As an Epicurean, here is what I believe:

--That there is no God who created the Universe, or is involved in human affairs, both in this life or after death.

--That the soul only exists as a phenomenon tied to the physical body, so it ceases to exist when we die. There is no heaven or hell after death.

--That there is matter which is composed of atoms, just as in modern science. And it follows natural causes, and is subject to natural laws. So that supernatural beliefs are incorrect regarding function of matter and the universe. Matter is subject to physical causes and conditions and my thoughts cannot physically affect the outcome of things -- only direct actions affect the physical world.

--That creating and living the most enjoyable life is a worthy goal. This means that I take charge of doing what needs to be done to set up the circumstances which will bring about the most pleasant and enjoyable life according to my unique personality and feelings. Other people may require differing elements or modes of living to experience an enjoyable life, and it is up to my own self to direct my pursuit of happiness -- no one else can do it for me. And therefore how I go about doing this may differ from others.

--That using wisdom and evaluating choices and avoidances to achieve the best outcome is an important part of creating a pleasant life.

--That understanding the nature of pain, pleasure, and desire is necessary for making good choices and avoidances. And that a pleasant life and a pleasurable life are equally important.

--That it is good to have good friends who share this same worldview and who wisely consider their actions in creating a pleasant and pleasurable life. And that the sharing of pleasure in friendship is a pleasure.

The Why -- This is important if others question my beliefs or if I am needing to explain to someone what I believe (more on this in the future).

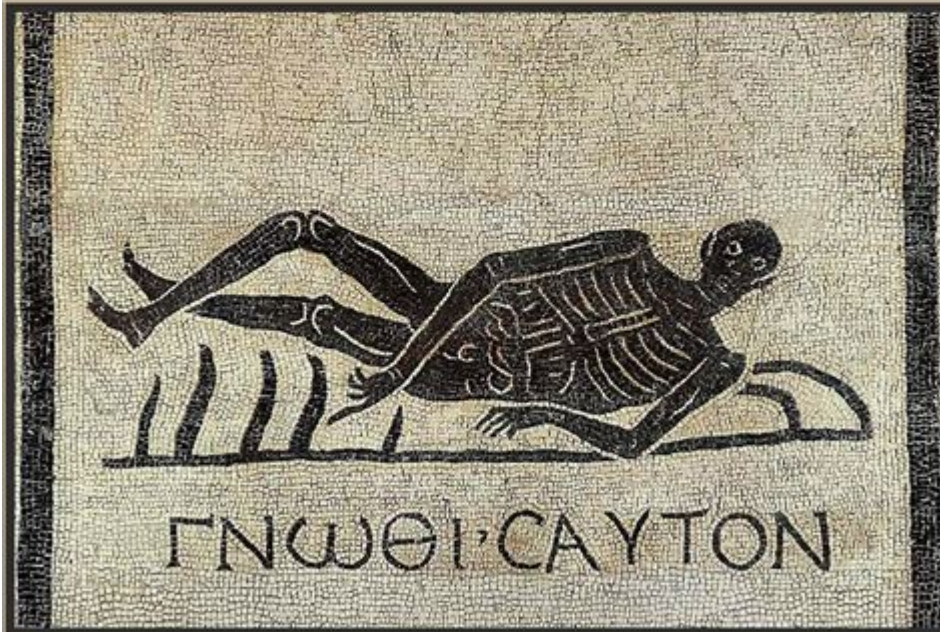
Post by “Godfrey” of December 23, 2022 at 3:25 PM

The only thing that might be helpful to change is the very end under The Why: it's also important to clarify this in order to live your best life, and to have ready at hand if you are in a situation where you question your beliefs.

Post by "Kalosyni" of December 24, 2022 at 8:52 AM

*Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able?
Then he is not omnipotent.
Is he able, but not willing?
Then he is malevolent.
Is he both able and willing?
Then whence cometh evil?
Is he neither able nor willing?
Then why call him God?*

-The Epicurean Paradox



*Memento Mori mosaic from excavations in the convent of San Gregorio,
Via Appia, Rome, Italy.*

...ofs regarding God -- after
... God allows suffering in
... moved on to atheism.

...adox", which sums it up:

Post by “Kalosyni” of July 27, 2023 at 5:39 PM

Today another outline:

Why Study Epicurean Philosophy?

I. It is a worldview in sync with modern science which is free from supernatural and superstitious beliefs

A. Why this worldview makes sense:

1. In Ancient Greece Epicurus asserted atoms and void as the natural basis of a material world. In our modern times with modern science we have a much more complete understanding of the nature of things.

2. Epicurus presented the epistemological canons of the senses, feelings, and anticipations as the proper way to know things. Now in modern times we have the scientific method, which also relies on observation.

B. Why this worldview is beneficial:

1. Understanding the material nature of things helps reduce fear because we know that things have causes.

a. We no longer have to worry that there are supernatural elements present in the world, or that a cruel God in heaven is the source of everything.

b. We no longer have to fear what happens after we die

2. We can focus on doing what we need to do in this lifetime and in this physical world, since there is only this life.

II. It is a way to decide what to pursue in life based on Nature's goal combined with the use of self-awareness and wisdom in decision making

A. What is nature's goal - we naturally move toward pleasure

B. Why follow nature's goal...because it is in line with our body and our mind

C. Guidelines for what desires to pursue - pursuing things which bring happiness both in the present and in the future (and also a list of necessities which bring well-being such as food, shelter, safety, belonging, etc.)

D. Self-awareness - the feeling of pleasure and pain and the ability to monitor these in line with a healthy mind in a sound body.

E. Wisdom in decision making - considering both the present and the future, and considering the overall well-being of our lives.

1. Sometimes we endure pain so that a greater pleasure will happen later, but we also choose pleasure now if it doesn't lead to a bad situation later.

2. We don't have worry that we have to prove to anyone that we are a good or worthy person, since life is to be enjoyed surrounded by those we love and those who love us.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 17, 2024 at 9:00 PM

Major areas of "existential" guidance suggested by Epicurean philosophy:

1. Put effort into developing prudence and friendship because these two things greatly contribute to leading a happy life
2. God is not involved with humans, so we must do what we can for ourselves rather than pray to God
3. There are no supernatural forces, but instead everything has natural causes
4. The "soul" dies with the body and there is no afterlife, so we do not need to fear what lies beyond death
5. Make this life the best that it can be by aiming for complete God-like bliss
6. Pleasure and pain has natural limits because it is subject to increase and decrease, but we can learn to extend feelings of pleasure through cultivating a feeling of contentment through the memory of past pleasures, as well as gratitude for healthy functioning and the experience of being without pain.

Post by “Kalosyni” of October 6, 2024 at 8:22 AM

I am adding this here rather than over in [this thread](#), because while it isn't exactly what Philodemus wrote (point 4 is modified), I feel that it is in alignment with Epicurean philosophy.

There could be multiple ways to express a "Four-point Cure":

1. God minds their own business and thus we have no need to fear them.
2. There is no need to dread death for no consciousness will remain to sense it.
3. The goods which are necessary for life and happiness are readily available to acquire.
4. The evils which bring the most terrible pains to the hoi polloi are actually easy to avoid.

(But then maybe an 8-point cure could encompass more 😊.)

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 13, 2025 at 1:05 PM

This functions as an an outline / list -- on ethics, and wanted to reference it (still a work in progress):

Post

[RE: Creating a "Seven Steps to the Ethics of Epicurus"](#)

Here is a work-in-progress outline for a course on the Ethics of Epicurus. (I will be adding in more details, and still needing to incorporate the above tips by Don, and others, as well as add in from Cassius' wiki list: Epicurean Ethics).

The Ethics of Epicurus 7 Week Course

Week 1: Introduction to Epicurean Philosophy Basics

Topics:

- Epicurus' life and historical context
- Brief overview of basic concepts: a materialist universe of "atoms and void" and Epicurean canonics (senses, feelings, and

...



Kalosyni

July 12, 2024 at 6:04 PM