

Unpaid_Landlord's personal outline

Post by “UnPaid_Landlord” of July 3, 2024 at 10:08 AM

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.

Date :- 3 July, 2024

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).

Post by “Joshua” of July 3, 2024 at 10:26 AM

Quote

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.

I'm happy to see you've isolated this point of tension, and I think the approach is a good one. We've been talking a lot about prolepsis lately and I think in order to understand that we need to understand what Epicurus also had to say about the nature of the soul, about 'films', 'images', or 'eidola', and much more.

Epicurus certainly knew that humans would gradually acquire more and better knowledge about the cosmos, and that, as he suggests in the Letter to Pythocles, we should withhold judgment in certain areas where our knowledge is still tentative at best.

Welcome to the forum!

Post by “Cassius” of July 3, 2024 at 11:06 AM

Thanks for the outline and it is a very good first post. My only comment to start out with would be as to this part:

[Quote from UnPaid Landlord](#)

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.

Yes I think each sentence there is pretty much true, but just as you've commented on the tension between modern Science and Epicurean metaphysics, I'd suggest similar caution on the relationship between "Pleasure" and "Aponia" and "Ataraxia." Ultimately Epicurus identified the highest good as "Pleasure," and while the ideal and goal is certainly be to be as *totally* free of mental and bodily pain as possible, one important phrase I think you will see cited here a lot is to not let "the perfect be the enemy of the good."

Some people get puzzled by the relationship between the Greek words and the practical day to day seeking to maximize pleasure and minimize pain, so if you have any concerns about that please be sure to bring them up.

Again, welcome to the forum, and we look forward to getting to know you better.

Post by "Kalosyni" of July 3, 2024 at 2:04 PM

[UnPaid Landlord](#) Great outline!

This section popped out at me:

[Quote from UnPaid Landlord](#)

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.

While these are somewhat true, I don't think Epicureans would say these kinds of things. (These sound Buddhist?...and they sound a bit depressing to me.)

Here is an Epicurean take on old age:

"It is not the young man who is most happy, but the old man who has lived beautifully; for despite being at his very peak the young man stumbles around as if he were of many minds, whereas the old man has settled into old age as if in a harbor, secure in his gratitude for the good things he was once unsure of." - VS 17

Here is an Epicurean take on ill health:

"Pain does not last continuously in the flesh; instead, the sharpest pain lasts the shortest time, a pain that exceeds bodily pleasures lasts only a few days, and diseases that last a long time involve delights that exceed their pains." - PD 4

Here is an Epicurean take on impermanence:

"The body cries out to not be hungry, not be thirsty, not be cold. Anyone who has these things, and who is confident of continuing to have them, can rival the gods for happiness." - VS 33

...and...

"Misfortune must be cured through gratitude for what has been lost and the knowledge that it is impossible to change what has happened." - VS 55

Here is an Epicurean take on virtuous actions:

"It is not possible to live joyously without also living wisely and beautifully and rightly, nor to live wisely and beautifully and rightly without living joyously; and whoever lacks this cannot live joyously." - PD 5

(All quotes above are Peter Saint-Andre translation).

Post by “Kalosyni” of July 3, 2024 at 2:15 PM

[Quote from UnPaid_Landlord](#)

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

And for an Epicurean take on death (which I missed in the above post):

"We are born only once and cannot be born twice, and must forever live no more. You don't control tomorrow, yet you postpone joy. Life is ruined by putting things off, and each of us dies without truly living." - VS14

This could be use some re-wording, so it sounds more upbeat, lol...

...perhaps this:

We are born only once, and we cannot predict when we will die - don't postpone your joy or put off truly living this life.

(Maybe I'll need to work on paraphrasing that one a bit better).

Post by “Kalosyni” of July 4, 2024 at 7:37 AM

[Quote from UnPaid Landlord](#)

What is the Goal of Epicureanism?

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

Here is my take regarding the Epicurean goal:

There are all these pleasures:

- There are pleasures of the body - sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, movement, rest, etc. - and these last for a certain allotment of time (some of these pleasures are very short lived).
- There are pleasures of the mind - joy which arises from friendship, sufficiency, wisdom, learning, gratitude, and remembering pleasurable experiences of the past, etc., ...as well as the cultivated awareness of when body and mind are free from pain - and these pleasures also last for a certain allotment of time (these can have a longer duration (for example it is stated that friendship is an "immortal good").

We do see that *eudaimonia* is mentioned in the Letter to Menoeceus:

"Reflect on what brings **happiness**, because if you have that you have everything, but if not you will do everything to attain it."

Eudaimonia is also roughly translated as well-being. So for myself, I see eudaimonia as being the goal (and eudaimonia also includes pleasures).

Being that pleasure is a natural uprising of life, then we accept all pleasures which lead to a life well lived - a full life lived with joy and well-being, and a healthy mind in a healthy body.

Also, if you look at PD 4 again (in post 4), you'll see that there is the word "delight", so to me this points to the idea that pleasure is to actively be sought out.

"Pain does not last continuously in the flesh; instead, the sharpest pain lasts the shortest time, a pain that exceeds bodily pleasures lasts only a few days, and diseases that last a long time involve delights that exceed their pains." - PD 4

So an Epicurean would specifically seek out prudent pleasures.

Post by "Little Rocker" of July 4, 2024 at 8:04 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

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(Maybe I'll need to work on paraphrasing that one a bit better).

Kalosyni is right--this is one of those times when Epicurus could have used a good editor! Maybe:

Look, we only have one life, and even tomorrow is not promised to us, so please, let's not dither our precious time away when we could be living joyfully.

Post by “UnPaid_Landlord” of July 5, 2024 at 1:45 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

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[Quote from UnPaid_Landlord](#)

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Ikr, they do sound somewhat depressing, and these sound Buddhist because they are Buddhist, that's why I said at the beginning of my outline that its not strictly Epicurean,

thanks for giving a Epicurean Take on these, these lines are called the 5 remembrances of Buddhism, their goal is to have the individual contemplate the impermanent nature of life to gain a different perspective, done in the right spirit, it invokes a sense of gratitude and humility, sometimes contemplating these harsh truths have their merit, but I can understand how someone would get depressed upon reading it, again thanks for making it more upbeat, I love this new positive take.

Post by “UnPaid_Landlord” of July 5, 2024 at 1:48 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Quote from UnPaid Landlord](#)

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I have a question [Kalosyni](#) I have heard somewhere that Epicurus favoured the pleasures of the mind over the pleasures of body, is that true ?

Post by “UnPaid_Landlord” of July 5, 2024 at 1:52 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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I understand, I think of more like an ideal to go towards but not achieve, a direction, but I won't let it get in the way of my day to day pleasures, don't worry, and thanks for pointing out

Post by “Kalosyni” of July 5, 2024 at 2:01 PM

[Quote from UnPaid_Landlord](#)

I have a question Kalosyni I have heard somewhere that Epicurus favoured the pleasures of the mind over the pleasures of body, is that true ?

In some sense you could say that is true: if your mind is full of anxiety then you cannot fully experience and savor the pleasures of the body.

But there is the quote by Diogenes Laertius Book 10, states that Epicurus says: [Section 06] 'I know not how I can conceive the good, if I withdraw the pleasures of taste and withdraw the pleasures of love and those of hearing and sight.'

Post by "Kalosyni" of July 5, 2024 at 2:56 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Quote from UnPaid_Landlord](#)

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But there is the quote by Diogenes Laertius Book 10, states that Epicurus says: [Section 06] 'I know not how I can conceive the good, if I withdraw the pleasures of taste and withdraw the pleasures of love and those of hearing and sight.'

To be more clear, I would say no, that pleasures of the mind are not more important - they are equally important.

Because daily you are experiencing both physical and mental pleasures. If you said that mental pleasure was more important, you then would have to try to suppress or avoid the naturally occurring enjoyment of various daily activities.

Post by "Kalosyni" of July 5, 2024 at 3:18 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

To be more clear, I would say no, that pleasures of the mind are not more important - they are equally important.

And something else to add...it is always contextual, so sometimes mental is more important and sometimes physical is more important. (I apologize for the disjointed reply).

[Cassius](#) could explain this better I think.

Post by “Godfrey” of July 5, 2024 at 4:38 PM

[Quote from UnPaid Landlord](#)

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 :-

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

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I've posted a potentially more Epicurean take on this here:

Post

[Epicurean contemplation of death: write a will](#)

This can be thought of as a different type of *memento mori* and a much more pleasant way to consider death than some Eastern methods, in particular the contemplation of the body in various stages of decay. Further, we have textual evidence that Epicurus went through this

exercise, although that evidence doesn't provide particular context as I recall.

Writing a will isn't a one-and-done thing: it should be periodically updated as one's circumstances change. And it may involve the more...



Godfrey

July 5, 2024 at 4:36 PM