

Am I an Epicurean?

Post by "Cassius" of April 28, 2018 at 4:59 PM

KDF, here are my thoughts - not intending to be judgmental, and certainly I am not qualified to define who is and who is not an Epicurean. But based on my reading and study, here is what I would say:

What you have described is a set of attitudes toward your that certainly indicate that you are generally working to apply a pleasure/pain analysis to your life, and that of course is consistent with Epicurus' advice. But since the topic of your question is "Am I an Epicurean?" I think it would be necessary to know a lot more before answering. Of course not everyone who pursues pleasure is an Epicurean, and there is a lot more to the philosophy than that single ethical conclusion.

I think that's the consistent issue we run into that people need to think about more deeply - your answers indicate that you are probably on the Epicurean course ethically, but whether your particular decisions have been reached via a line of thinking that Epicurus would recommend depends on your circumstances, and on your foundations in the other branches of Epicurean philosophy.

For example you do not mention your view of "gods," or "fate," or the meaning of "death." And you do not indicate your view of the issue of knowledge/certainty/confidence, and of logic vs the senses, in your observations and your conclusions. I argue that "ethics" is far downstream of those more fundamental issues about the nature of life and the universe. Unless one has a grounding in those issues, and more or less accepts the Epicurean viewpoint on them, then it's likely that at some point of stress or misfortune that the person "falls away" from Epicurean philosophy, because they've never really understood the framework in the first place.

So my preliminary comment is that definitely your ethics are at least superficially reconcilable with Epicurus, but to answer "Am I an Epicurean" would require considerably more information. Feel free to elaborate or not, but thank you for posting!