

What In Your Opinion Are the Most Essential Characteristics Of "Being An Epicurean" (According to Epicurus)?

Post by "Elayne" of February 16, 2021 at 12:21 PM

I thought we were saying something different and was glad to see the ♥ in case I added useful information. Bryan's post focused on physical pleasure but in a way that seemed somewhat minimalist to me... whereas I read Epicurus as promoting both mental and physical pleasures, but noting that mental pleasures can predominate and become accessible at all times. One must take physical action, such as engaging in friendships, in order to have material for ongoing mental and physical pleasures-- rather than being passive.

There's a risk with talk of calmness and gratitude in forgetting that quite a bit of action is generally needed to secure our pleasures, rather than passively trying to be glad about whatever happens, no matter what that is. When dying, Epicurus took pleasure in memories of combined mental/physical pleasures (because an encounter with friends is both) which he had taken action to experience. So it's not just that we get a roof, a coat, and food and then focus on being calm. We actively arrange for pleasurable experiences.

A person can gain such skill at mental pleasures as to successfully enjoy life even during physical pain, but the reverse is not true-- no type of physical pleasures can enduringly compensate for mental pain. And this is not to say we would neglect or disdain physical pleasures!