

# Godfrey's Epicurean Outline

**Post by "Godfrey" of December 10, 2018 at 8:40 PM**

First, kudos to Cassius for creating this forum and thanks to all who have been posting. It's really great to have a place to learn, discuss and/or get feedback!

I'm seriously lost in the rabbit hole of the anticipations and the gods. My current thoughts on these are in the outline and I'm posting the entire outline to get some feedback on my general grasp of the philosophy.

Unless there are suggestions otherwise (help!), from here I'm planning to read the DeWitt chapters VII, VIII and XIII for his take on the anticipations and the gods, then Barwiss for more on the anticipations. These topics are pretty mind bending and maybe a bit incomplete in the sources, but I think that coming to an understanding of them will be valuable to an overall understanding. Plus they seem to be inter-related in that understanding one may help to understand the other and vice versa. Anyway, here goes:

## **KNOWLEDGE/CANON**

- The five senses are our primary source of information.
- Anticipations/preconceptions are an instinctual, intuitive source of information which exists in advance of experience.
- Pleasure and pain, both mental and physical, are our guides to action.
- Reason and intuition are secondary to and necessary for evaluating and understanding information from the senses, the anticipations and the feelings.

## **NATURE/PHYSICS**

- We live in an infinite universe consisting exclusively of matter and void.
- Nothing is created from nothing and nothing is reduced to nothing. Therefore the universe has always been and will always be.
- Science needs to be studied only to the degree that it brings relief from fear.
- It is impossible to verify the existence of the gods through the senses, therefore knowledge of their existence or non-existence is based solely on the information of the preconceptions and the feelings and, after that, reason.

## **ETHICS/ACTION**

- The ultimate good is life itself.
- Pleasure is the goal of life. This is because it is the end goal of all other goals.
- Pleasure is defined as: freedom from mental and physical disturbance.
- Prudence, honor and justice are prerequisites for pleasure.
- Contemplation and analysis of desires is an integral part of Epicurean practice.
- Natural and necessary desires are those that lead to pain when not fulfilled (food, clothing, shelter, safety). Training oneself to fulfill only these desires leads to the simplest life of pleasure.
- Each individual must analyze their additional desires as to whether they lead to pleasure over pain. These further desires will not increase pleasure but vary it.
- In some instances it is valuable to endure pain in order to achieve a resultant pleasure.
- The fulfillment of some desires leads to more desire. These desires are unnatural and should be avoided.
- "Direct every preference and aversion toward securing health of body and tranquility of mind, as this is the sum and end of a blessed life."
- The Three Goods are friendship, autonomy, and the analyzed life.
- Autonomy is achieved by living frugally, only desiring what is natural and what can be maintained by a source of income which provides an excess of pleasure over pain.
- The analyzed life is a life of pleasure, evaluated and lived by constant attention to the three degrees of desire and according to the Canon.
- The Four Remedies are: don't fear the gods; don't fear death; pleasure is easy to procure; pain is easy to endure.
- Justice is an agreement among beings and is not absolute.

Thanks!