

On Use Of The Term Apikoros / Apiqoros / Bikouros Against Epicureans

Post by "Cassius" of December 17, 2018 at 9:14 AM

Admin Edit

This thread came back to life in 2024. Unfortunately I can't remember the context in which it was first written. It starts with a paste of a comment from someone else, and I believe that comment itself was in response to the "What if Life Were All About Pleasure?" article. As a result the original thread was a little disjointed, although the intent is clear - to focus on the friction between Epicurean philosophy and certain of its opponents. I am therefore cleaning up the original post by editing it slightly to make it more fitting for a thread-starter, which is turning into a discussion of "Apikoros" and related labeling. Also as to the reference to Tacitus at the end of the post I see that the phrase Tacitus used was "[odium humani generis](#)" which was slightly off from the original thread title, so I am changing that too.

What if Life Were All about Pleasure?

David Davidson | Thu, October 31, 2013 | Misc.



Paul, in Acts 17:18, addresses adherents to two philosophical schools: Stoicism and the Epicureanism. We already know that the Stoics had much in common with the early Christians; not so the Epicureans, for whom life's highest goal was individual pleasure.

A poster:

Just remember that the Hebrew word for 'heretic' is 'סורוקיפא' or 'Epikoros'. This author of [this blog](#) is much more favorable to Epicureans than many I've read. For example, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia, Epicurean Philosophy "stands for a refined and calculating selfishness [...] a [...] principle, but one which he wrongly applied, since he got rid of what was true [...] The whole philosophy may well be described in a trenchant phrase of Macaulay as 'the silliest and meanest of all systems of natural and moral philosophy'.

These are some of the shittiest ways of saying 'Epicureans just wanna have fun' I'm come across. [<https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3...TXXmQnr1u-pb4xz>]

NEWADVENT.ORG [CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: Epicureanism](#)

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/631-on-use-of-the-term-apikoros-apiqoros-bikouros-against-epicureans/?postID=1627#post1627>

Well. There's a solid billion human beings who (blindly, or otherwise) follow a system that maintains that our outlook is both 'silly' and 'mean'.

Fair enough. I think their system is 'cruel' and 'brutal'. Early proto-Catholic in-fighting, and persecution of Arianists and Chalcedonians, violent crusades against Catharists, vicious wars between Catholics and Protestants, marginalization of Calvinists, persecution of Mormons ... and that's just sectarian in-fighting between people who all believe in Jesus and an afterlife. Not to mention their treatment of Jews and Muslims, who also believe in transcendental powers and an afterlife. They don't know what to do with us. ?

----- end of poster's comments -----

Cassius:

Here is a clip from that page, with a phrase we all know, but which is increasingly significant to me:

Epicurean ethics

Philosophy was described by Epicurus as "the art of making life happy", and he says that "prudence is the noblest part of philosophy". His natural philosophy and epistemology seem to have been adopted for the sake of his theory of life. It is, therefore, proper that his ethics should first be explained. The purpose of life, according to Epicurus, is personal happiness; and by happiness he means not that state of well-being and perfection of which the consciousness is accompanied by pleasure, but pleasure itself. Moreover, this pleasure is sensuous, for it is such only as is attainable in this life. This pleasure is the immediate purpose of every action. "Habituate yourself", he says,

to think that death is nothing to us; for all good and evil is in feeling; now death is the privation of feeling. Hence, the right knowledge that death is nothing to us makes us enjoy what there is in this life, not adding to it an indefinite duration, but eradicating the desire of immortality.

FOR ALL GOOD AND EVIL IS IN FEELING.....! And that does not necessarily mean simply what we see, touch, taste, hear, or smell. Because PLEASURE and PAIN are feelings, and our minds process those feelings, yes in part based on current senses, but also on what we have experienced in the past. I believe this means that "all good and evil" are in our emotional feelings / reactions to life. Not in simply the data that our senses present to us, but in our FEELINGS about that data.

Death is the end not only of what we see and taste and hear and feel, it is also the end of our consciousness' ability to FEEL anything pleasurable or painful. It seems to me that life without feeling - which is what I associated as the goal of Stoicism - is a living death. And that is what some philosophers, some religions, some people - really want - slaves - a living death! In effect they would prefer robots, and you might as well call the Abrahamic religions and the Stoic-like philosophies a form of "robotism." They consider Epicureans heretics, and paraphrasing the sentiment attributed to Tacitus I bet the ancient Epicureans considered them effectively "enemies of the human race."