

Godfrey's Epicurean Outline

Post by "Godfrey" of December 22, 2018 at 2:50 PM

Here's the current work-in-progress version of my personal outline. In an effort to bring EP more directly into my daily life, I've added (hopefully not heretically) a "practice" category. I've made revisions in the other categories for clarity and to reduce some redundancies that I had.

CANON

- The five senses are our primary source of information.
- Anticipations/innate ideas are an instinctual, intuitive source of information which exists in advance of experience.
- Pleasure and pain, both mental and physical, are how we evaluate information and 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.

PHYSICS

- We live in an infinite universe consisting exclusively of matter and void: everything is subject to natural law. Therefore there is by definition no supernatural realm. Nothing exists outside of the universe which could have created the universe.
- Nothing is created from nothing and nothing is reduced to nothing. Therefore the universe has always been and will always be.
- All compounds are impermanent, but the elementary particles composing them are indestructible and over time recombine to form other compounds.
- The soul is corporeal and begins and ends with the body.
- Science is necessary to dispel superstition and fear and to understand the limits of pains and desires.
- The gods are a topic that I need to give more thought to....

ETHICS

- Because there is no supernatural realm and no afterlife, the greatest good is life itself.
- Pleasure is the goal and guide of life. It is set by nature: pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain leads to maintaining life. Pleasure is the end goal of all other goals.
- Pleasure is a state of gratification. Since mind and soul are corporeal, pleasure includes health of mind and body and freedom from mental and physical disturbance.
- Prudence, honor and justice are prerequisites for pleasure.
- Each individual must contemplate and analyze their desires as to whether they lead to pleasure over pain. For each particular desire ask "what will be the result for me if the object of this desire is fulfilled and what if it is not fulfilled?"
- 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.
- Some desires are natural but not necessary. These further desires will not increase pleasure but embellish it.
- The fulfillment of some desires leads to more desire. These desires are unnatural and should be avoided.
- In some instances it is valuable to endure pain in order to achieve a resultant greater pleasure.
- 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.
- Friendship adds to the variety of pleasure through sharing. Among these many pleasures are security and love of philosophy.
- Justice is an agreement among beings and is not absolute.

PRACTICE

- Throughout each day, periodically pause and notice a pleasant sensation: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste.
- Exercise daily for the pleasure of movement and for the benefit of good health.
- Rest daily (in addition to sleep) for the pleasure of relaxation and for the benefit of good health.
- Compose a daily haiku or haibun for the pleasure of reflecting on philosophy and on events of the day.

- Review decisions with respect to the categories of desire and the results if fulfilled or not fulfilled.

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