

A Challenge To Epicurean Thinking Grounded in Epistemology and Physics

Post by "Cassius" of March 15, 2022 at 8:55 AM

[Quote from EricR](#)

There are serious philosophical arguments involved in this, but they take us a long way from EP and what I think is its strength, a practical set of principles for achieving happiness in the world.

Eric the only thing that you have typed that I disagree with is the "they take us a long way from EP." And I say that because I think its strength IS a practical set of principles for achieving happiness, and I think also that Epicurus agreed with you that one of the tool sets that is necessary for the greatest happiness is the ability to deal with epistemological questions with dexterity.

What you're talking about here is pretty much what I see as the number one weakness of "modern" Epicureans - we're focusing too much on the broad ethical generalizations and not enough on the reasoning process that supports it.

I have been convinced for a long time, and am getting more convinced every day, that the looseness and ambiguity with which many people seem to interpret the ethical pronouncements derives from this failure to understand the metaphysical / epistemological approach that Epicurus was teaching.

In that sense "Modern Epicureanism" in many camps has become a lot like "Modern Stoicism": Divorce the philosophy from its physics and epistemology and you end up with a gooey (and ineffective) self-medication for pain that is 180 degrees away from what the founders of both schools were trying to accomplish. Both modern Stoics and modern Epicureans would be better off just checking themselves into a psychiatric or medical clinic if "freedom from pain" or "apathy" is all that they want from life.

That's why I think the best term for what we should be doing here is "Classical Epicurean" philosophy - and one of the main things on the agenda needs to be to make more progress on the issues we're discussing in this thread.