

Is Epicurean life achievable only for well off?

Post by "Kalosyni" of September 20, 2022 at 5:01 AM

[Quote from waterholic](#)

My question is: could Epicurean philosophy be of any use to someone in abject poverty and misery as a starting position? After all, much of religion has historically been used to create contentment in misery. Being satisfied with one's own position is all well if the society is just (broadly). Nearly all sources of Epicurean-leaning thought from Buddha (a rich prince who decided to leave the palace and spend some time under a tree) to Bertrand Russell (who argued in favour of idleness while really not needing much gainful employment) happens to originate in the "opulent quarters" of the city.

More practically, partly due to chance and partly due to choice, I am somewhat independent and can have comfortable life without overstressing. How do I suggest to those significantly less fortunate to be satisfied with whatever is within their reach?

I think that it might be good to consider that happiness depends on a certain level of fulfillment of basic necessities. If you don't have the basics (food, shelter, clothing) then you will have a high level of discomfort in life. Also, you need to know that your basics are going to be covered in the future, or else you will be absorbed in worry. So you need to have a sense of a secure future (there may be a PD on this?). And all of this depends upon the ability to problem solve as to what to do so as to secure one's future. I would guess that possessing the ability to problem solve and then also carry out necessary actions may be dependent on intelligence levels (and also having good mental health).

So then the question: How many people go through life feeling worry about their own financial situation? (and doubt their ability to secure food and shelter in the future). This isn't a problem of just poor people, but also some in the middle class who feel uncertain about their future (if you don't save enough money for retirement or have loans that you need to pay off).

Quite a number of times Maslow's hierarchy of needs has come up on the forum -- and I would say that there is something to that. Once basic needs are met then one can turn to intellectual pursuits and also deal with "spiritual" issues (fear of death, question of life after death, nature of the universe, etc)

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I am not as conversant with the details of some of the Philodemus material (on property management)

I also still need to study Philodemus. But it almost appears to me that the implications are that many Epicureans were well off (perhaps in a similar manner as the "landed gentry" in England). Managing wealth can be a time consuming endeavor, and I think that is one thing that Philodemus gives advice on. Interestingly, I do wonder if later Epicureans such (as Philodemus) are the ones who developed more therapeutics (beyond dealing with fear of death, etc) and in the aid of removing discontent and increasing happiness.