

July 3, 2023 - Monday Night Epicurean Happy Hour - Via Zoom (1st Monday each month)

Post by "Kalosyni" of July 4, 2023 at 8:16 AM

A big Thank You to everyone who attended our Monday Night Epicurean Happy Hour! We had a great turn-out of 10 members. Being that it was a more informal meeting, and "happy hour", I was happy to see that some of us had beverages of choice to enjoy during the meeting. It did seem that perhaps eating while talking during a Zoom is a bit awkward or even difficult (seemed like I was the only one who was snacking). So perhaps we'll just do a "byob" announcement for the next one 😊

Here is the speech I gave at the start of the meeting:

Are We Living Like the Gods Yet?

Living as the gods can be a poetic way to imagine the best life as an Epicurean. If we have come to a point in our lives in which we are easily able to fulfill all of our basic needs for both physical and mental well-being, have we arrived at our goal? Perhaps for some of us, in quiet moments, we feel that there is yet some unrealized necessity going unfulfilled. We have no master list of necessities which we must achieve. But we can continue to develop prudence as we navigate through our sense of pleasure and pain, developing and using our practical wisdom to guide us in how we make choices and avoidances.

Since we are here on earth, and not living in the intermundia as the gods do, we must work to make a living, and we know that living well requires us to put in both time and effort into maintaining our households - VS 41 reminds us: "One must laugh and seek wisdom and tend to one's home life and use one's other goods, and always recount the pronouncements of true philosophy."

Recently I've been contemplating the ending of the Letter to Menoecus which reads:

"So practice these and similar things day and night, by yourself and with a like-minded friend, and you will never be disturbed whether waking or sleeping, and you will live as a god among men: for a man who lives in the midst of immortal goods is unlike a merely mortal being."

So here are two places in which the word "goods" is seen. And this could be a clue about the kinds of virtues which can be used as tools to move us forward in living a joyous and pleasurable life. I've mentioned prudence already, and it is referred to as practical wisdom in the Letter to Menoecus. Also in that same letter we see that self-reliance is a good. VS 77 summarizes it best: "The greatest fruit of self-reliance is freedom".

Also, from VS 78 we know that friendship is considered an immortal good. The Torquatus section of Cicero's "On Ends" says this about friendship: "One topic remains, which is of prime importance for this discussion, that relating to friendship, which you declare will cease to exist, if pleasure be the supreme good, yet Epicurus makes this declaration concerning it, that of all the aids to happiness procured for us by wisdom, none is greater than friendship, none more fruitful, none more delightful. Nor in fact did he sanction this view by his language alone, but much more by his life and actions and character. And the greatness of friendship is made evident by the imaginary stories of the ancients, in which, numerous and diversified as they are, and reaching back to extreme antiquity, scarce three pairs of friends are mentioned, so that beginning with Theseus you end with Orestes. But in truth within the limits of a single school, and that restricted in numbers, what great flocks of friends did Epicurus secure, and how great was that harmony of affection wherein they all agreed! And his example is followed by the Epicureans in our day also."

And also in Cicero's Torquatus section it says:

"What a noble and open and plain and straight avenue to a happy life! It being certain that nothing can be better for man than to be relieved of all pain and annoyance, and to have full enjoyment of the greatest pleasures both of mind and of body, do you not see how nothing is neglected which assists our life more easily to attain that which is its aim, the supreme good?"

So I ask myself, have I realized that goal? And what about you? Have you realized that goal for yourself? I hope this serves as some food for thought, that it bolsters your spirits, and encourages you all to continue on with your studies and continue to seek to apply the philosophy to your own lives.