

Can Determinism Be Reconciled With Epicureanism? (Admin Edit - No, But Let's Talk About Why Not)

Post by "Cassius" of February 23, 2024 at 7:21 PM

I think it's time for an Administrative comment targeted mainly at those who might lurk and be reading this thread without knowing anything about the major participants.

Those who know Onenski know that he is a highly valued participant of long standing who has piled up tremendous amounts of credibility points for his general support and interest in Epicurean philosophy over many months, even years. He is a regular in our meetings and he is always constructive and helpful.

Onenski's posts in favor of determinism certainly contradict a key aspect of Epicurean philosophy, and a long series of pro-determinist arguments would violate our forum policies, as we are not here to invite in people who are dedicated to anti-Epicurean positions. We don't have to all agree on every issue, but we do need to respect that this is a pro-Epicurean forum, and those who conclude that their beliefs require them to be a constant thorn in the side of those who support Epicurus will eventually be shown the door. More to the point, there are many "outsiders" who - if they came into the forum and pursued determinist arguments strongly - would have their posting privileges restricted or removed.

We just don't have the time to patronize the many Stoics and other anti-Epicureans who are determinists and would be happy to monopolize our time. We also don't need to expose our sincere lurkers and newer participants to the demoralizing aspects of determinism any more than is necessary.

However this is a topic that will never go away, and people who study Epicurus will be regularly confronted by it, just as was Epicurus and the ancient Epicureans. It's important for people to have at least a basic understanding of the arguments and to have a basic understanding of where Epicurus stood on the issue, and that's why this thread is continuing and why the posters here aren't violating the letter or the spirit of our forum rules.

We should thank Onenski and others for their respectful postings on this topic, as the thread is becoming an excellent resource for the future.

Since Epicurus strongly opposed determinism, and held that praise and blame can be attached to actions regardless of what the determinists argue, we can simply remind anyone who might be tempted by the leeway we offer to established members that we will happily wield the ban hammer when necessary for the protection of the purposes of the forum.

No one at this point is anywhere near needing this warning, but given that the related issues of determinism and skepticism have proven in the past to be two of the best indicators of the

division between those who stay with Epicurean philosophy and those who are just "passing through" on their way somewhere else, this can serve as a marker to assist in future moderating decisions.