

Epicurean Views On Hierarchy In Social Structures

Post by "DavidN" of March 13, 2024 at 1:05 PM

[Quote from Peter Konstans](#)

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The master of this world will soon come after you and crucify you.

I believe that this poetic metaphor (and some of the other ideas in the above post) doesn't lead to finding good health and happiness of the soul. In fact it distracts from seeing the world "as it is". The best way to do that is start with your own life, and ask yourself: are you feeling more pleasure than pain? If not, why not? And what can you do to make your life more pleasant? And then remember that there will always be problems in the world, but if you say to yourself that you can't live a good life until all problems in the world are solved, then you will miss out on your one opportunity to experience what Nature endowed us with: the ability to experience pleasure. And we maximize it by using prudence, which also means that we "choose our fights" as some things just beyond our influence or our control. Don't miss out on making this one life as best as it can be - we only live once - and look for the goodness and pleasure that you can experience while you are yet alive. 😊

You see, Epicureanism has an egalitarian ethos and a tendency to want to opt out of mainstream culture (traits that it shares with early Christianity and some egalitarian movements in the modern era) but it also shows little interest in fighting or provoking same mainstream culture. I think there was an Epicurean strategy of 'faked conformism' which explains why for example Epicurus and his followers continued to participate in religious rituals and pretended to be as pious as everyone else (I agree that they were not atheists in the modern Anglo-American sense but they were definitely far from traditional polytheists) or why the Epicureans never experimented with things like common ownership of wealth even though the acquisition of wealth and luxuries runs contrary to a marked preference for minimalism. To illustrate how strong the Epicurean tendency for minimalism was consider the cause of Epicurus' death. His kidney disease likely came about as a result of an extremely low-fat diet.

The "tendency to opt out" of contemporary culture in Epicureanism is meant to be a personal strategy for ataraxia. Throughout ~700 hundred year classical period Epicureans were not

meeek submissive bystandards to history. They wrote scathing works against other philosophical schools, participated in the roman civil war on both sides, actively tried to suppress the christian cults, etc. What they did not do is hide in there gardens and try to "conform" to society. They were popular at the time for the very reason that they gave people a real alternative to mainstream culture. To the original point, If Epicurus was "faking" piety for the sake of conformity, then why would he take the time to write his own theory of the gods. Rather if your theory were correct Epicurus would have simply stated that it is easier and more pleasurable to simply conform to common culture, which is not a tenet of epicurean philosophy. Instead I posit that the idea of Gods was more ingrained in humanity than you think, that it is easy for us now to accept a world devoid of Gods, but at the time it was a more difficult concept to grasp. But instead what Epicureans did was to create a theory of the Gods that depersonalizes them, and removes them as a weapon of the priesthood. Which was a much easier idea to come to at the time, because as Epicurus noted, "everyman worships his own god."