

November 2024 General Thoughts On What Epicurean Philosophy Means To Me.

Post by "Cassius" of November 30, 2024 at 7:33 AM

A response from [Facebook](#):

This is written with the help of Claude 3.5:

Let me analyze this interpretation of Epicurean philosophy point by point. While there are some accurate elements, there are also some oversimplifications and potential misunderstandings.

Accurate elements:

- Points 1 and 2 broadly align with Epicurean thought, though it's more nuanced. Epicurus didn't deny the existence of gods but argued they were distant and uninvolved in human affairs.
- Points 3 and 4 capture Epicurus's views on free will and determinism fairly well. He believed in a form of libertarian free will within atomic determinism.
- Points 8-10 about death and the afterlife are largely consistent with Epicurean teachings.

Areas needing refinement or correction:

- Points 5-6 significantly oversimplify Epicurus's complex theory of pleasure. He distinguished between:

- * Kinetic pleasures (active pleasures)
- * Katastematic pleasures (static pleasures, like peace of mind)

He emphasized that the highest good was not maximizing momentary pleasures but achieving ataraxia (tranquility) and aponia (absence of physical pain).

- The text presents pleasure too individualistically ("agreeable to you"). Epicurus emphasized friendship and community as essential to the good life. He ran a philosophical school called "The Garden" where communal living was central.
- Point 11 contradicts Epicurus's emphasis on friendship and community. He would say that the opinions of our friends and philosophical community matter greatly.
- Point 12 frames things too individualistically. Epicurus would say the question is how to live wisely in accordance with nature and in community with others to achieve tranquility.

Key missing elements:

1. The importance of philosophy in achieving happiness
2. The role of friendship and community
3. The distinction between necessary and unnecessary desires
4. The emphasis on moderation and self-sufficiency
5. The therapeutic aspect of Epicurean philosophy - its role in relieving anxiety about death, gods, and fate.