

Welcome ZarathustrasGarden!

Post by “ZarathustrasGarden” of August 6, 2025 at 6:55 PM

Hello friends! Pleased to make your company! As I have already written a rather long introduction message for Cassius, I figured I would just post what I said there and add a little to the end.

My philosophical history and journey to Epicureanism is quite interesting. I myself was raised Catholic, but was rather indifferent to it until in my late teens I got more interested in the faith, influenced heavily by the works of Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle (I had heard the 5 ways, then read some arguments for God and the church from Saint Anselm as well as excerpts from the Summa Theological and Summa Contra Gentiles, as well as De Anima and some of Aristotle's other work regarding metaphysics).

There were many things within the faith, however, that I found myself unable to be convinced of (the supernatural realm, belief in essences even with Aristotle's middle solution of essences existing concretely in things but abstractly in minds, Plato's third man problem as well as his later work turning away from essentialism and moving to a quasi-Wittgensteinian understanding of particulars, as well as various other issues with the metaphysics and historicity of the Church) got me to explore other thinkers. Chiefly, at this point I was interested in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and Ludwig Wittgenstein (I had read the tractatus with a guide and took courses in Nietzsche's corpus in University). I thus realized the flaws behind metaphysics, the Principle of sufficient reason, the perspectival nature of truth, etc.

Having thus freed myself from the Catholic faith, I engaged with many new thinkers and philosophies. Chiefly though, I was concerned about how one ought to live a pleasant, happy life and create new values and modes of living, as philosophy to me has always been a deeply lived experience, with their being far less utility in simply pontificating about reality as such (though that can be interesting also). This led me to an interest in Zen Buddhism, the works of Goethe (the idea of Bildung appealed heavily to me, as well as Faust's leitmotif of finding something valuable in the act of striving itself) and of course namely for this website, Epicurus.

I had been exposed to Epicurus previously (I have always been interested in Greek philosophy) and have read Licetius's On the Nature of Things. I was also interested in Epicurus because many of his scientific claims (for example his atomism) cohere so well with the findings of modern day science, and also because of his physiological honesty. Epicurus doesn't need to make recourse to a hidden world (or pretend that "nature itself" supports his perspective like the stoics do): he is a physiologist through and through, and approaches the question of happiness in a clinical way, much like Buddhism does (both free themselves of metaphysical justification to address how one ought to act in the here and now). And of course, one of my other favorite philosophers, Nietzsche, has a very high opinion of Epicurus (though not without

his criticisms!). In one of the aphorisms in Human All to Human he introduced me to his ideas: the idea that there is a refinement in moral feeling when one liberates themselves from Gods and preconceptions about death, to create a feeling of serenity and peace to replace religious awe. He also mentions one of Epicurus's critique of Plato (calling the Epicureans Dionysioklates, literally meaning actor, which I also found apt).

Having been introduced to Epicurus, re reading Lucretius and discovering some of Epicurus's letters and reading more about his biography, I found a stunning temperamental similarity to myself. I myself loathe contemporary politics, the bickering and posturing that occurs from having to defend modern Yes's and No's (I totally understand why the Garden lay far from Athens's center). The idea that what it takes to live a life of pleasure is a couple close friends, nature, good food and drink and philosophy, that appealed to me. And so I would like to learn more about Epicurean philosophy and connect with others who feel similarly!

Thank you for reading. I know it was a long response, but I would like to sincerely engage with the members of this forum. Please let me know if there's anything you would want to chat about and please message me if you think we have any shared interests!