

On The Importance of Understanding The Nature of Things And Canonics To Ethics (A Post By Elli At Facebook)

Post by “Cassius” of October 26, 2025 at 8:56 AM

A poster at the Epicurean Philosophy Facebook Group wrote as follows:

I understand that Epicurus was ahead of his time with his physics, and I understand how it connects. But I'll tell you right now I skimmed it once I got the understanding that he focuses on the material and that you don't have to fear gods. For the third time, my interest is more in the ethics. That's where I spent more time reading and focusing.

So I have no clue that authors view on the swerve because I don't really care to be honest. It doesn't affect me. I'm not too worried about being free from fear of gods because I haven't been afraid of divine punishment in 8 years. Already worked through that one.

[Elli Pensa](#), one of our admins there and here, wrote the following response (which is why I am posting this:

[Elli Pensa](#)

Admin

First of all, best greetings!

I speak with Epicurean frankness and friendship, because friendship is ethics in action, and Epicurus placed it at the very heart of the pleasant and eudaemonic life.

When you say you're not interested in Epicurus' physics and epistemology, and prefer to focus only on ethics, it sounds - even if unintentionally- like you're saying: “The study of nature is over. There's nothing more to learn. I already know how to live.”

But Epicurean ethics isn't a set of ready-made answers engraved in marble stone. It's a practice of phronesis - practical wisdom - and phronesis is rooted in how nature works and how knowledge evolves.

Epicurus didn't want people who simply followed him. He wanted friends who think - who engage critically, deepen their grasp of reality, dig deep to uncover the roots, and refine their understanding through shared inquiry.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4780-on-the-importance-of-understanding-the-nature-of-things-and-canonics-to-ethics-a/?postID=37598#post37598>

In other words: don't wait for someone to hand you the fruit, already chewed and sweetened. Epicurus wanted companions who cultivate the tree.

If you dismiss physics, how will you set limits to pleasure or pain? How will you distinguish fantasy from reality, falsehood from truth? How will you judge the phenomena as they unfold? How will you judge the books you're asking for, if you haven't studied the sources - like Epicurus' letters or Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things* etc?

Perhaps what you're seeking isn't phronesis, but ready-made knowledge - an authority to tell you how to live.

Epicurus didn't say, as Socrates did, "look only at ethics and search only within yourself." He said: "Study nature continuously - and through that, enjoy calm in your life."

Even the Epicurean Colotes, responding to Socratic views, warned against the ego-centered idea that ethics can stand alone. Ethics without physics and epistemology becomes self-centered opinion, not liberating insight.

And one more thing - when we enter a space of dialogue, like this one, and ask "what books should I read?", maybe it's kind and respectful - not just for you, but for all of us - to greet those who respond. A small gesture of friendship - that's ethics in practice.

After all, in the ethics you're seeking, Epicurus gave the highest value to friendship.

That's how we overcome the chaos of anonymity, the blur of online "infinity" - and through Epicurus' physics and epistemology, we find real security in ethics.

With care and epicurean friendship  image not found or type unknown