

# Discussion of the Society of Epicurus' 20 Tenets of 12/21/19

**Post by "Elayne" of December 30, 2019 at 11:12 AM**

Hiram, I have no standard for "perfect people" or "perfect Epicureans" other than the degree to which people achieve pleasure. A perfect person would be exactly as Epicurus described his gods, beings experiencing continuous total pleasure without pain. So in that regard, I haven't met anyone who got that far, including myself, but I can say I have learned by experience how to enjoy my life more and more. And that for me it requires total rejection of idealism in favor of reality testing.

I also don't know what it means to have a right to have flaws. The only flaw I know of would be some kind of habit or characteristic reducing one's own pleasure, and I don't know why anyone would want a right to less pleasure. However, observation of biological reality does tell me, as I've said above, that we do get in our own way sometimes.

Your choice of that framing tells me you have a very different perspective from mine-- some other kind of way to define perfect or flaws. You asked for examples of idealism, and what you just said is one!

As far as friendship goes, I can't make decisions ahead of seeing behavior. I accept your apology, and I would need to see repeated, prolonged evidence of friendliness before I could make that kind of decision. More evidence than from a stranger who had not been unkind.

However, as long as you think in an idealist way and are actively promoting this as a way to view reality, that is going to be unpleasant to me. It wouldn't be a basis for friendship, because it would cause me pain and not mutual benefit of pleasure. I will feel obligated, for the benefit of my friends, to say that you are wrong and that I hope people don't listen to you.

If you changed your way of thinking such that you adopted a realist philosophy, even if you decided Epicurus wasn't a realist and therefore rejected him, it would be easy to be your friend, because our disagreement would only be about what Epicurus meant, rather than about truth itself.

Certainly I do not expect any friend to be a source of pure pleasure and no pain in my life, if

that is what you meant by a perfect person. If someone is my friend, I have a strong feeling of love and loyalty to them which overrides many pains they cause me unintentionally, and even sometimes intentionally if they are sincerely sorry and make amends. A betrayal would need to be repeated and/or severe before it would break my love. Friendship is a deep bond of feeling. I don't enter into it lightly, because of that. To say you are my friend means that you love me so much that if I am in need of your help, you would drop everything and come to my aid, and I for you. And that we trust each other not to make those requests excessively, so as to cause each other pain. It can start from a less complete bond, but a mature friendship means the friend's pleasure and pain is entangled deeply with your own.

By that definition, which is described by Epicurus but which I developed by my own experience with beloved friends, you and I are not friends. But I will agree to leave that possibility open, depending on how you treat me and those whose pleasure is entangled in mine from here forward.