

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

Post by “Elayne” of December 30, 2019 at 6:59 PM

Hiram, the word "perfect" and "without flaws", applied to human behavior, conventionally uses the most common absolute moral standards, which are already idealist. It's baked into the words. If you ask a random person on the street what a person without flaws is like, they would use whatever absolute moral standards they'd been taught, such as "always honest", "altruistic", "always kind" "self-sufficient", etc. There would be some person to person variation, but those will be typical responses. I haven't done a formal study, but for decades I have asked parents of young children what kind of adults they hope to teach their children to be. It gives me insight that's useful when conflicts arise. It helps me remind them later and ask if they are demonstrating what they want to teach, in their own choices.

I would imagine that their "perfect person" would have these qualities completely. And those are the kinds of answers I get.

But that type of vision of a perfect person is a little different between people. It's also based on virtues. I have never heard a "perfect person" described as "someone who is always able to choose for their pleasure."

So that is why I asked what you mean by perfect. If you mean the usual, and if Philodemus does, it's abstract and idealistic. It's saying there's a definition we would all agree on which is based on some virtue.

So I ask again-- do you mean that typical definition? And if so, which virtues go into your own definition? Do you see how using virtues to define flawless is idealistic? If not, I am confused as to how to communicate. I am not obsessed with idealism. I just know how to recognize it, and I'm frankly baffled as to why it isn't obvious to you, so I keep re-explaining it.