

[Historical Records] from The Epicurean Philosophy Facebook Group

Post by "Cassius" of May 30, 2015 at 9:28 PM

****THIS WEEK IN EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHY - 05/30/2015****

** This is the one hundred and eighth in a series of weekly reports on news from the world of Epicurean Philosophy. Our home base for discussion is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/EpicureanPhilosophy/> Copies of these posts, and links to active Epicurean websites, are stored at EpicurusCentral.wordpress.com.

** We welcome all participants and lurkers. If you apply to participate and don't receive a reply promptly, please send an email to an admin about your interest in the group. We are here to discuss Epicurean Philosophy, have fun, and in the words of Lucian, "strike a blow for Epicurus - that great man whose holiness and divinity of nature were not shams, who alone had and imparted true insight into the good, and who brought deliverance to all that consorted with him!"

**This week I am posting on time and will return to my traditional format after a couple of important points:

**First, this is a good time to review the options available for those who wish to discuss Epicurus within any of several custom frameworks. This past week we had many discussions on the same topic, and it's clear to me that things are shaping up in this general direction:

1- If you are someone whose views are fully formed, and you've combined several disparate viewpoints into your own personal mix, and you mainly want to talk casually to other people of the same eclectic type, there are several excellent facebook groups including EPISTOBUZEN and "Epicureanism for Modern Times" that you can find by searching facebook.

2- If you are focused primarily on Epicurus, and you want to participate in a forum where people will defend Epicurus strongly from all challenges, then you have two Facebook options. Our open and main group, entitled simply "Epicurean Philosophy," is the home base of this post. Anyone can read the posts there, and all you have to do is ask in order to join. (Note that there is an "About" and a "Sticky" post with our forum rules.)

3 - If you prefer to post in a "private" group where your posts are not readable by outsiders, last week we set up just such a group, "Epicurean Private Garden" and that is now getting off the ground. Because it is a private group, you cannot find it by searching, and you have to email one of our admins in the open group if you wish to join. Please note that our About and Sticky Post rules in the private forum are the same as the open forum, and the private forum will be

moderated to the same standards as the open forum (or perhaps slightly tighter!)

4 - If you are not only focused primarily on Epicurus, but you wish to assist with a forum platform where pro-Epicurean activists can build for the future, check out <https://www.epicureanfriends.com/www.EpicureanFriends.com>. I am working on a FAQ list there, and setting up the forum in such a way that it can be used for reference material in the future. Anyone can read the posts, but only approved members can create new posts or comment.

The second general comment is that recent debates continue to sharpen the issues that separate our Epicurean Philosophy Facebook group from other groups, which are the same that separate Epicurean philosophy from other philosophies. If you are the sort person whose primary emphasis is Stoicism, Buddhism, or some similar philosophy, and you have concluded that "nothingness" or "escape from pain" is your primary focus in life, then you are going to be more at home in one of other groups listed above, and not in the Epicurean Philosophy Group. You are welcome to read and participate in the Epicurean Philosophy Group, but you are going to find that those views will be challenged vigorously, as the Epicureans challenged them in the ancient world. Unfortunately, we are finding on a fairly regular basis that people who are committed to opposing viewpoints wish to come into the main group and argue their anti-Epicurean positions for purpose or argument, and not because they are genuinely interested in supporting Epicurean views. Such posts are in violation of our "About" section, and in the end such people will be removed from the group. The reason for that is simple: We are dedicated to providing a reliable source of EPICUREAN philosophy to those who come by with a sincere interest in learning. We are not going to allow anti-Epicurean arguments to remain unanswered in the group, and after a while it simply becomes too distracting to reply to them all. Check out either of the groups mentioned above and you will see an eclectic combinations of ideas with little way to differentiate them if you are not already familiar with Epicurean philosophy. If you come to the main group you should not have that problem.

*** Much of the division comes down to this: Some people - MANY people, in fact - are happy to endorse Epicurus and study him, but they do so because they believe that his "absence of pain" remarks make him a kind of Super-Stoic, more ascetic even than the famous philosophers of Stoicism. Such people believe that Epicurus preached that we should pursue only "Necessary" pleasures, which they define as little more than breathing, drinking water, and eating bread while locked in their cave.

The administrators of the Epicurean Facebook Page differ in the finer points of their positions on this issue, but they uniformly reject the characterization of Epicurus that I just mentioned. In general they hold to a view stated well by Thomas Jefferson and quoted today by Alexander Rios from Jefferson's "Head and Heart" letter:

**** Let the gloomy monk, sequestered from the world, seek unsocial pleasures in the bottom of his cell! Let the sublimated philosopher grasp visionary happiness while pursuing phantoms dressed in the garb of truth! Their supreme wisdom is supreme folly; & they mistake for

happiness the mere absence of pain. Had they ever felt the solid pleasure of one generous spasm of the heart, they would exchange for it all the frigid speculations of their lives, which you have been vaunting in such elevated terms.****

The Epicurean Philosophy Facebook Group, and the web pages set up by its core administrators, are dedicated to pointing the way back to an understanding of Epicurus that gives full effect to his philosophy, and does not stand it on its head through an out-of-context reading of a few passages in the letter to Menoeceus. All of us are happy to explain why those passages do NOT mean that Epicurus was an ascetic or a Stoic, but our primary goal is to explain that to people of good faith who really want to know, and not to people whose primary goal is to argue for argument's sake, and otherwise distract us from the work that we are doing to research, write, and reinvigorate the Epicurean movement.

--- End of sermon ---

This week Hiram continued with a series of good background posts on Epicurean theory. These included:

Reasonings About Philodemus on the Stoics -
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...34248633290765/>

The Pleasure - Aversion Faculty <https://theautarkist.wordpress.com/2015/05/20/the...n-introduction/>

A Notice that the Partially Examined Life Website will be reading "A Few Days In Athens"
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...35105996538362/>

A post on the "Book of Community"
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...34770049905290/>

Reasonings about Philodemus on Music
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...36031499779145/>

Epicurus' Instructions on Innovations:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...36074026441559/>

*** This week has also been an excellent one for "memes" put together by Panagiotis Alexiou and Elli Pensa. Here are a few:

On Friendship - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...34327403282888/>

On the Categories of the Desires -
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...34328083282820/>

On [Death is Nothing To US](https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...34751746573787/) - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...34751746573787/>

On Diogenes of Oinoanda's passage on "Shouting to all Greeks and Non-Greeks that PLEASURE is the end of life" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...33478563367772/>

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/27-historical-records-from-the-epicurean-philosophy-facebook-group/?postID=65#post65>

On Principal Doctrine Four: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...35473289834966/>

On Principal Doctrine Five: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...36008823114746/>

On Principal Doctrine Three: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...35473183168310/>

On Epicurus Replies to Zen: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...35969573118671/>

On Vatican Saying Eleven: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...36075223108106/>

*** I also want to mention a post that Dragan made this week about marriage, which contains some good commentary, especially by Elli - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...35121579870137/>

There's more that I did not capture here, but this post is too long already -

**Thanks to all who participated the the Facebook forum this week. As always, if you have any comments, questions, or suggestions, please add a comment or participate in the Epicurean Philosophy Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/EpicureanPhilosophy/> or hop around the internet world of Epicurean Philosophy by checking the links here: EpicurusCentral.wordpress.com

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Live Well!

Cassius Amicus