

Who said that one of the main points of Epicureanism was anti-platonism was right indeed...

Post by “smoothiekiwi” of July 25, 2022 at 4:08 PM

Hi!

I was absent from the forum for a few months, because I (finally!) finished high school and the exam season kicked in. But this time has allowed me to "rethink" some parts of Epicureanism. And I indeed just now begin to realize the utmost importance of the anti-platonic stand of Epicureanism.

I think that one of the biggest killers of happiness is the idea that you are OBLIGED to do something by a higher force. In our current society, its often morale. You have to do this or that because its morally right so. And I'm the first one to admit that breaking with this mindset is incredibly difficult- especially when it has been "brain wired" for decades. For me, it was always a stance connected with "a person without principles", who does whatever they want.

But indeed, only by putting away the mindset of "I'm **forced** to do something", we're able to experience ourselves. By removing the idea that I have some moral obligation from me, I'm actually freer than ever. But not in a bad sense. In fact, I'd say that I live a more happier and thus kinder life. When I do something, it's because I WANT it. I'd even say that the Epicurean mindset has a lot to do with growing up. Taking responsibilities for my own actions. Not taking my orders/what I have to do from sources of morality, but just from myself.

This view of the world is... incredibly liberating. Fascinating. And I'm having to admit to myself that the freedom I experience in regards to myself is making the time I'm currently in the happiest time of my life. I'm honest to myself, to my own desires, to my wishes. And thus, when I act in a certain way, I act honestly and with self-kindness. Not because I have to do something, but because I want to. Not because I'm forced to spend my time in a certain way, but because I choose it out of my free will.

In that light, I honestly get a grasp of why Epicurus was so loved and admired by his students. His worldview is a worldview of liberty, of personal responsibility and, as far as I can judge it, of self-love. I have gained acceptance that if I want to do something, and if it's going to bring me happiness, that's the right thing to do- regardless of what morality and society says. And the best thing about it? I act more conscious. I'd even say that I live a more "morally right" life, although I don't like using the word "moral"

The question you may ask yourself- why is it in the category "vs Stoicism"? Well, first of all, I couldn't find a better one- and secondly, I think that the anti platonic stance of Epicureanism is

a fundamental contrast to the "divine logic" of Stoicism. In fact, I think, the "basis" of Epicureanism and Stoicism are as opposed as it can get. Stoicism bounds the individual to love the fate, Epicureanism- to love the things which make you happy, to love your body and mind who can always judge what's good or bad for you, in short- to love yourself. Stoicism- to love everyone, but yourself, because, to put it in Ciceros words, you're just a patient trying to get healthy. But you're, in the view of a Stoic, always imperfect; you can never become a sage. Epicureanism, I think, teaches you that the sage, the one who can help lead you a fulfilling and happy life, is already in you. Your feelings, pleasure and pain, are the best sages there can be. You just have to grasp them.

And I think that I'll take this mindset with me- regardless of whether I stick with Epicureanism or not. Platonism makes the human being realize their own faults and that they'll never reach perfection. Epicureanism teaches us that our feelings are valid, we have a right to feel happy at certain things or unhappy at others. Basically, to just trust ourselves and believe in our emotions. And no, Pyrrhonism, go away! I still don't think that everything is indifferent.

So- thanks Epicurus, I guess.

And Stoics- I'm sorry, but I don't want to be Cato, I want to be Atticus 😊

P.S.: Sorry for this huge post... I had to try and structure my thoughts for a few weeks. I hope you understand more or less what I mean. If not, sorry, I tried...

TL;DR: Stoicism bad, Epicureanism good, Platonism worst. and this post should belong on Reddit or something

Post by “Don” of July 25, 2022 at 9:10 PM

Well, welcome back, @smoothiekiwi .

Post by “Cassius” of July 25, 2022 at 9:47 PM

Great post Smoothiekiwi!

Post by “smoothiekiwi” of July 28, 2022 at 7:25 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2609-who-said-that-one-of-the-main-points-of-epicureanism-was-anti-platonism-was-righ/>

Thanks! To be honest, I'm sure that the ones of you who have been here longer than I'm alive already know this stuff, but for someone "new" this might prove beneficial.

so, for the people who read that from the future- enjoy the stay here, I guess 😊

Post by “Cassius” of July 28, 2022 at 11:01 AM

I am not sure it is possible for any of us to become convinced that we have constructed the definitive statement of any of the Epicurean doctrines, even the major ones. Every time I talk to someone about them I end up saying it a little differently to customize it to the context. I can definitely see why Epicurus advised surrounding yourself with like minded people to discuss these issues regularly, and I don't think we have even scratched the surface for finding new and better ways to describe and convey the big picture. So I may not be new here but it's definitely beneficial to read your summary and every new one that gets posted.

And another part of it is that the interests and issues that concern us one day tend to shift to other areas over time. So the discussion never gets old and it's fascinating to hear and consider what different people find to be important.