

Happy Belated 20th - And Thoughts On Suicide from An Epicurean Perspective

Post by "Cassius" of March 21, 2019 at 11:55 AM

[Quote from Oscar](#)

Unfortunately, my university is experiencing an epidemic of student suicides.

Wow, Oscar that is very sad. Thanks for posting about this and posting your editorial. This ought to be a subject that Epicurus would have a lot to offer on.

Post by "Elli" of March 21, 2019 at 2:43 PM

I am sad to hear that and this is a very serious issue on how Epicurean Philosophy will be helpful to this situation that concerns young people 😞. Imo Epicurus's epistle to Meneceus should become known to the most of the young people, since as we know Epicurus had addressed this letter to a young man.

However, in Greece we did not experience an epidemic of young persons suicides. We did experience an epidemic of adults-parents suicides when the financial crisis made them to lose their jobs, their homes and in general things that were the means that were built upon their personality. Any of their reputation was structured on things and not on themselves or on their pleasurable relationships with the very next people i.e. their values had no any value, and not purpose. And when there is no value without an aim, the desires are measured without prudence. So the desires are reaching the infinite, and may lead to the nihilism of suicide.

However Epicurus admonishes to self-sufficiency and his sayings 44-45 are :

"The wise man when he has accommodated himself to straits knows better how to give than to receive, so great is the treasure of self-sufficiency which he has discovered".

"The study of nature does not make men productive of boasting or bragging nor apt to display that culture which is the object of rivalry with the many, but high-spirited and self-sufficient, taking pride in the good things of their own minds and not of their circumstances of external things".

Thus, for some of greek people when they did not had money to pay the loans to the banks for their luxury home they committed suicide. Because their measurement was that the things will be always the same, and the banks are our good fellows. They did not take for granted those wise greek idioms that are told by the old people saying "You do not take loans from banks, because you have to cover your bed with that blanket that fits to your bed" OR " the prudent children are cooking before they will be hungry".

Meanwhile in Greece the only epidemic of the young people is their migration to the other countries of Europe for finding better conditions for jobs. And as I learn from many sources the most of them are managed to be fine, because as we see in Nature the most adaptable in any environment is the one that survives. IMO the problem for young people is based on the inability to express their feelings of love and care to each other, and is due to their fear of the rejection from others, and many other fears e.g. for the future. They be focused to the unknown future without living the present. So, I agree that closer relationships would be a cure, as well as to understand that the purpose in life is the pleasure that is build upon values like friendship and not upon antagonism. Friendship that is based on frankness of speech and the common benefit that is accompanied with the self-sufficiency are the strongest armors and the fortresses to confront any difficult situation in every era.

Post by "Elli" of March 21, 2019 at 4:38 PM

Speaking with you for students in Universities, I would like to share with you an experience. The daughter of my companion lives in USA as she is getting a Phd in the University of Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh. Last year she send an email to her father when with surprise she saw an epigram that it was hanging inside her University. The epigram was the following Epicurean saying :

"We do not so much need the assistance of our friends as we do the confidence of their assistance in need". - Epicurus

Thus, her father send me her email and I answered to both of them with the following :

The epicurean saying that is hanging inside the University is the No. 34. Nevertheless, in the "friendship" and before we refer to this saying 34, in the order of epicurean sayings precede two others, which are very important. That is, we first understand the sayings 23 and 28 and then we end up with 34. Thus, we clearly see that friendship, like any relationship, is not something abstract, elusive and idealistic, but is based on mutual benefit as being applied, in a course of life, according to experience (i.e. with frankness of speech that is accompanied with actions of care). That is, to end up in 34 and to have confidence of our friends' assistance in

need, we have checked them as they have checked us too. In the saying 28 the word "δοκιμαστέον" as used by Epicurus, it is at the beginning of each friendship-relationship. Because, for the approval of someone in our life and to move on, we have to run some risks too. Otherwise, if someone does not like to run some risks he would sit on his sofa staring the ceiling of his home. And whenever he would have a need to talk to someone or to be helped by someone, so then he'll talk to his ceiling.

The epicurean sayings 23 and 28 are the following :

XXIII.(23) Every friendship in itself is to be desired; but the initial cause of friendship is based on the [mutual] benefit.

XXVIII.(28). We must not approve either those who are always ready for friendship, or those who hang back, but for friendship's sake we must run risks.

Post by "bradley.whitley" of March 21, 2019 at 9:52 PM

Oscar and all,

I teach 8th grade students. Suicide is always a threat. Epicurus can help. I am even seeing this in my young sons. They are finding happiness and pleasure in simply being. No stressing of "ideal" or "model" this or that. Just trusting the senses and anticipations, looking at Nature, and living. Once you shed the "forms" the "plan" etc. Kids and adults suddenly find life. A life of pleasures.

Post by "Cassius" of March 22, 2019 at 2:34 PM

Thank you Oscar! I want to watch the video before commenting further. This is a very important subject.

Post by "Hiram" of March 26, 2019 at 10:52 AM

I addressed this in a piece for The Humanist, but from the perspective of "right to die" only in cases of terminal illness

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/828-happy-belated-20th-and-thoughts-on-suicide-from-an-epicurean-perspective/>

<https://thehumanist.com/magazine/may-j...rstand-epicurus>

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/828-happy-belated-20th-and-thoughts-on-suicide-from-an-epicurean-perspective/>