Classical Epicurean Philosophy - Four Points of Emphasis At EpicureanFriends.com

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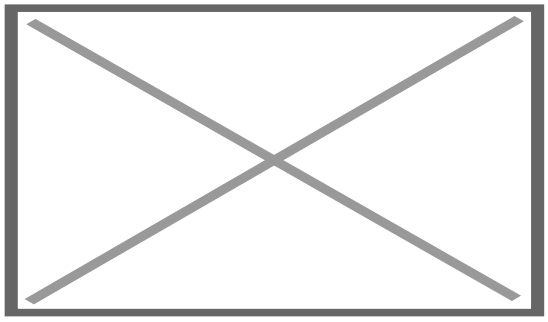
This document has been superseded and will soon be deleted.



The following document summarizes sources in support of each of the four primary points of emphasis at EpicureanFriends.com. This list will continue to be displayed, as it has in the past, as a right-side graphic, but as of 7/7/23 is being added to the main section of the home page for ease of reference on mobile devices.

The sources listed below could be greatly expanded, so please feel free to make suggestions for additions in the comments below. Four items are included so as to keep the list manageable and consistent with the goals of the forum.

Items one, two, and four are self-explanatory. Item three, a direct excerpt from Epicurus' letter to Menoeceus and included as well within Principal Doctrine 3, is included here to emphasize the basis of the Epicurean teaching that "good," "evil," and "virtue" are relative to the feelings of pleasure and pain rather than absolute.

1. Four Points of Emphasis At EpicureanFriends.com

1.1. There Are No Supernatural Gods

1. **Lucretius Book 2 - 1090**
   1. *Bailey* - "And if you learn this surely, and cling to it, nature is seen, free at once, and quit of her proud rulers, doing all things of her own accord alone, **without control of gods**."
   2. *Humphries* - Holding this knowledge, you can't help but see, That **nature has no tyrants over her**, But always acts of her own will; **she has no part of any godhead whatsoever.**"
   3. *Brown 1743* - "These things, if you rightly apprehend, Nature will appear free in her operations, **wholly from under the power of domineering deities**, and to act all things voluntarily, and of herself, without the assistance of gods."
   4. *Munro* - "If you well apprehend and keep in mind these things, nature free at once and rid of her haughty lords is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself without the meddling of the gods. "
   5. *M.F. Smith* - "Once you obtain a firm grasp of these facts, you see that nature is her own mistress and is exempt from the oppression of arrogant despots, accomplishing everything by

herself spontaneously and independently and free from the jurisdiction of the gods. "

1.2. There Is No Life After Death

1. **Lucretius Book Three [560]**
    1. *Munro:* "Therefore, again and again I say, when the enveloping body has been all broken up and the vital airs have been forced out, you must admit that the senses of the mind and the soul are dissolved, since the cause of destruction is one and inseparable for both body and soul."
2. **Lucretius Book Three [679]**
    1. *Munro*: "Wherefore, again and again I say, we must believe souls to be neither without a birth nor exempted from the law of death; for we must not believe that they could have been so completely united with our bodies, if they found their way into them from without, nor since they are so closely interwoven with them, does it appear that they can get out unharmed and unloose themselves unscathed from all the sinews and bones and joints."

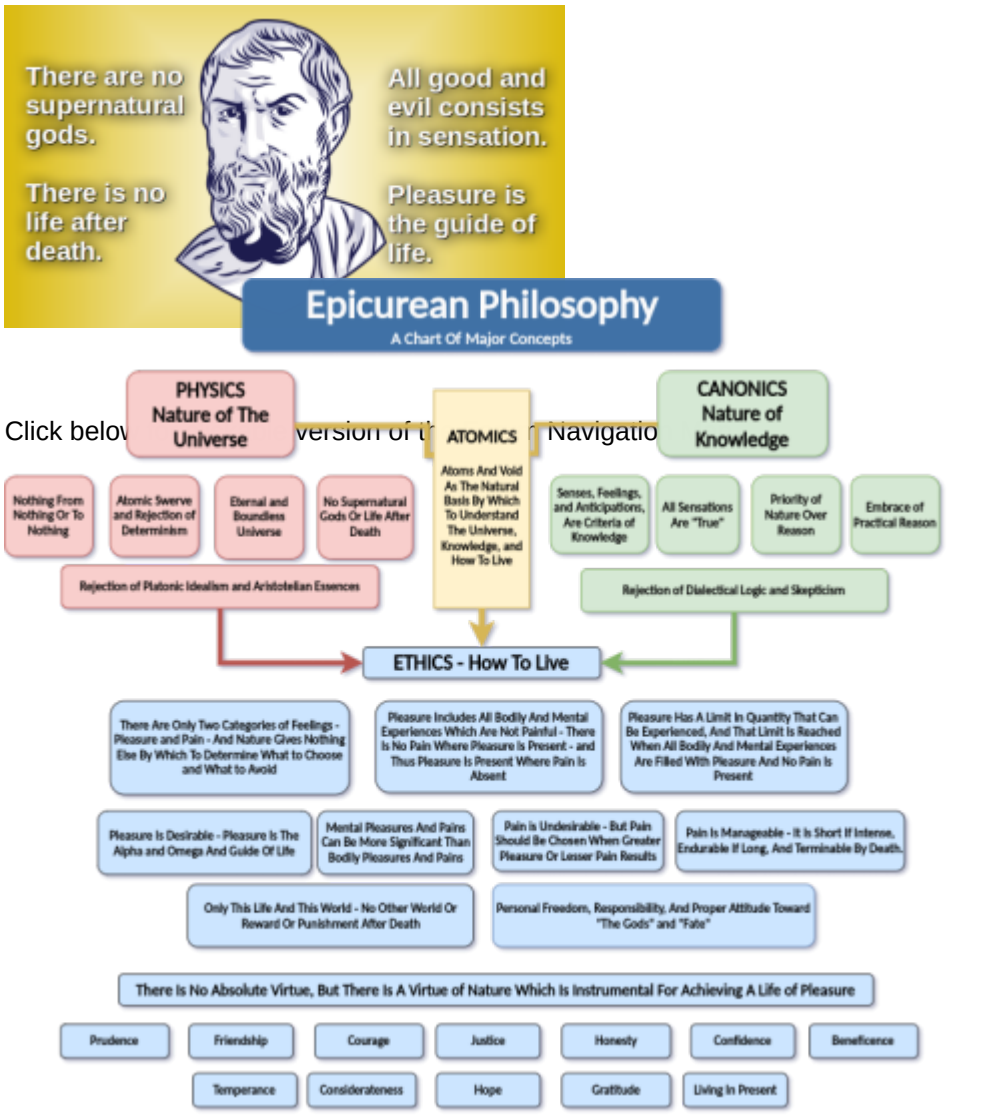
1.3. All Good And Evil Consists In Sensation

1. **Letter to Menoeceus [124]**
    1. *Bailey*: "Become accustomed to the belief that death is nothing to us. **For all good and evil consists in sensation,** but death is deprivation of sensation. And therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not because it adds to it an infinite span of time, but because it takes away the craving for immortality."
    2. *Hicks*: "Accustom thyself to believe that death is nothing to us, **for good and evil imply sentience**, and death is the privation of all sentience; therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not by adding to life an illimitable time, but by taking away the yearning after immortality."
    3. *Inwood-Gerson*: "Get used to believing that death is nothing to us. **For all good and bad consists in sense-experience,** and death is the privation of sense-experience. Hence, a correct knowledge of the fact that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life a matter for contentment, not by adding a limitless time [to life] but by removing the longing for immortality."
    4. *Epicurus Wiki (Epicurism.info)*: " Accustom yourself to thinking that death is no concern to us. All things good and bad are experienced through sensation, but sensation ceases at death. So death is nothing to us, and to know the truth of this makes a mortal life happy -- not by adding infinite time, but by removing the desire for immortality."

1.4. Pleasure is the guide of life.

1. **Lucretius Book Two [167]:**
    1. *Munro*: "But some in opposition to this, ignorant of matter, believe that nature cannot without the providence of the gods, in such nice conformity to the ways of men, vary the seasons of the year and bring forth crops, ay and all the other things, which **divine pleasure, the guide of life**, prompts men to approach, escorting them in person and enticing them by her fondlings to continue their races through the arts of Venus, that mankind may not come to an end."
    2. *Rouse:* "But some in opposition to this, knowing nothing of matter, believe that without the gods' power nature cannot with so exact conformity to the plans of mankind change the seasons of the year, and produce crops, and in a word all else which **divine pleasure, the guide of life**, persuades men to approach, herself leading them and coaxing them, through the ways of Venus, to beget their generations, that the human race may not come to an end."
    3. *Humphries*: "Some people do not know how matter works. They think that nature needs the will of the gods to fit the seasons of the year so nicely to human needs, to bring to birth the crops And other blessings, which our guide to life, the radiance of pleasure, makes us crave through Venus' agency. "
2. Epicurus' Letter to Menoeceus [129]:

1. Bailey: [129] And for this cause we call pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life. For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good.



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