

A MISSIONARY PHILOSOPHY

"This is the sort of thing you might have heard an Epicurean preaching in the market square of an ancient city. If it sounds like a religious message, that is no coincidence; Epicurus was revered by his followers as though divine, a sage who had answers to all the important questions of life. What attracted converts was the prospect of personal happiness, for which Epicurus offered clear philosophical advice."

- D.S. Hutchinson

In 306 BC, Epicurus started a philosophical school just outside Athens called the Garden, which taught that a modest, pleasant life surrounded by a community of supportive friends, with a proper understanding of the natural world free from superstition, was the highest good humans could aspire to. It flourished for 700 years thanks to adherents eager to share its simple message with the world. Epicurus' letters and books circulated widely, and his teachings were put out on public monuments.

The Garden School of Athens was an intellectual refuge for all people, men and women, slave and free:

"...for there are plenty of witnesses of the unsurpassable kindness of the man to everybody; both his own country which honoured him with brazen statues, and his friends who are so numerous that they could not be counted in whole cities; and all his acquaintances who were bound to him by nothing but the charms of his doctrine, none of whom ever deserted him. . . Also, the perpetual succession of his school, which, when every other school decayed, continued without any falling off, and produced a countless number of philosophers, succeeding one another without any interruption. We may also speak here of his gratitude towards his parents, and his kindness to his brothers, and his gentleness to his servants (as is plain from his will, and from the fact too, that they united with him in his philosophical studies, and the most eminent of them was the one whom I have mentioned already, named Mys); and his universal philanthropy towards all men."

- Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Epicurus*

ADOPT OUR WISDOM TRADITION

If you want to start living a pleasant life of philosophical communion, take the Philodeman Oath: "I will be faithful to Epicurus, according to whom it has been my choice to live."

Celebrate the Eikas Feast on the 20th of every month with your friends and loved ones. Start your own traditions. Use philosophy as an excuse to see friends you haven't seen in a while. Talk about the things that make life worth living, or just enjoy each other!

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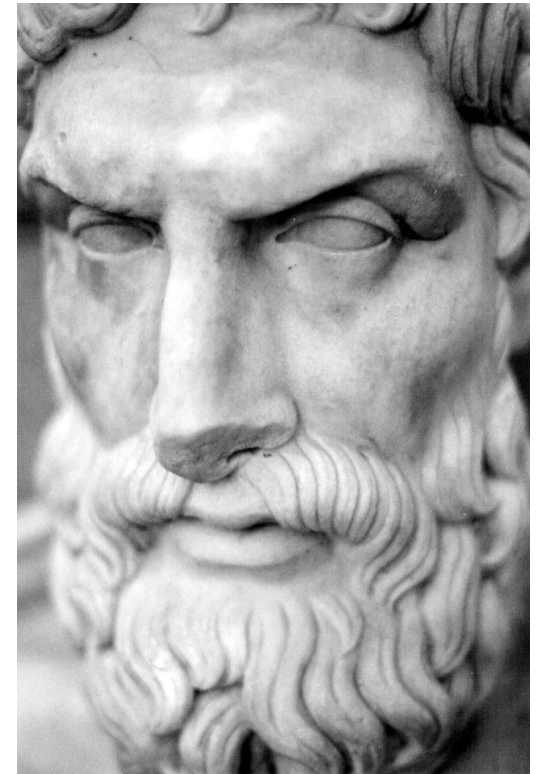
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PEACE AND SAFETY!



INTRODUCTORY PAMPHLET ON EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHY



"It is not the pretense but the real pursuit of philosophy that is needed; for we need not the semblance of health but rather true health."

- Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings*, 54

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WHO WAS EPICURUS?

Epicurus of Samos (341-270 BC) was an ancient Greek philosopher and sage and the founder of Epicureanism, one of the major schools of Greek philosophy. Influenced by Democritus, the Cyrenaics, and other pre-Socratic philosophers, he forged a new teaching. From humble beginnings on the island of Samos, he would go on to develop a philosophy that would inspire millions. The work of his school carries significance even in our modern world, because it addresses some of life's most central questions.

WHAT DID EPICURUS TEACH?

It was recorded that Epicurus had written over 300 scrolls. Most of these were lost and only a handful of teaching letters and two collections of maxims were preserved. His teaching emphasized living well through the careful pursuit of pleasure and minimization of pain, the development of one's character in harmony with justice, nobility and prudence, and reasoning based on empirical evidence within a natural cosmos of particles and space.

SELECTIONS FROM *LETTER TO MENOECIUS*

"Let no one put off the love and practice of wisdom when young, nor grow tired of it when old. For it is never too early or too late for the health of the soul. Someone who says that the time to love and practice wisdom has not yet come or has passed is like someone who says that the time for happiness has not yet come or has passed. Young or old, it is necessary to love and practice wisdom, so that in old age you can be youthful by taking joy in the good things you remember, and likewise in youth you can be mature by not fearing what will come. Reflect on what brings happiness, because if you have that you have everything, but if not you will do everything to attain it."

"Keep in mind that some desires are natural whereas others are groundless; that among the natural desires some are natural and necessary whereas others are merely natural; and that among the necessary desires

some are necessary for happiness, some for physical health, and some for life itself. The steady contemplation of these facts enables you to understand everything that you accept or reject in terms of the health of the body and the serenity of the soul — since that is the goal of a completely happy life."

EXCERPTS FROM *PRINCIPAL DOCTRINES*

"That which is blissful and immortal has no troubles itself, nor does it cause trouble for others, so that it is not affected by anger or gratitude (for all such things come about through weakness)."

"Death is nothing to us, because a body that has been dispersed into elements experiences no sensations, and the absence of sensation is nothing to us."

"Pleasure reaches its maximum limit at the removal of all sources of pain. When such pleasure is present, for as long as it lasts, there is no physical or mental pain."

"Continuous physical pain does not last long. Instead, extreme pain lasts only a very short time, and even less-extreme pain does not last for many days at once. Even protracted diseases allow periods of physical comfort that exceed feelings of pain."

"It is not possible to live pleasantly without also living wisely and honorably and justly, nor to live wisely and honorably and justly without living pleasantly; and whoever lacks this cannot live pleasantly."

"Of all the things that wisdom provides for the complete happiness of one's entire life, by far the greatest is friendship."

EXCERPTS FROM *SELECTED SAYINGS*

"Necessity is an evil; but there is no necessity for continuing to live with necessity."

"Poverty, if measured by the natural end, is great wealth; but wealth, if not limited, is great poverty."

"Don't spoil what you have by desiring what you don't have; but remember that what you now have was once among the things only hoped for."

"Let us completely rid ourselves of our bad habits as if they were evil men who have done us long and grievous harm."

"It is pointless for a person to pray to the gods for that which they have the power to obtain by themselves."

"Question each of your desires: 'What will happen to me if that which this desire seeks is achieved, and what if it is not?'"

"Freedom is the greatest fruit of self-sufficiency."

THE *TETRAPHARMAKOS* OR FOUR-FOLD CURE

1. Do not fear the gods.
2. Do not fear death.
3. What is good is easy to get.
4. What is evil is easy to endure.

OTHER EPICUREAN QUOTES

"To such heights of evil have religions of fear been able to drive men." - Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*

"Although many fine things result from friendship, there is nothing so grand as having one to whom one will say what is in one's heart and who will listen when one speaks. For our nature strongly desires to reveal to some people what it thinks."

- Philodemus of Gadara, *On Frank Criticism*

"I say both now, and always, shouting out loudly, to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the highest end of life!" - Diogenes of Oenoanda, *The Inscription*

"As you say of yourself, I TOO AM AN EPICUREAN. I consider the genuine (not the imputed) doctrines of Epicurus as containing every thing rational in moral philosophy which Greece and Rome have left us."

- Thomas Jefferson, *Letter to William Short*