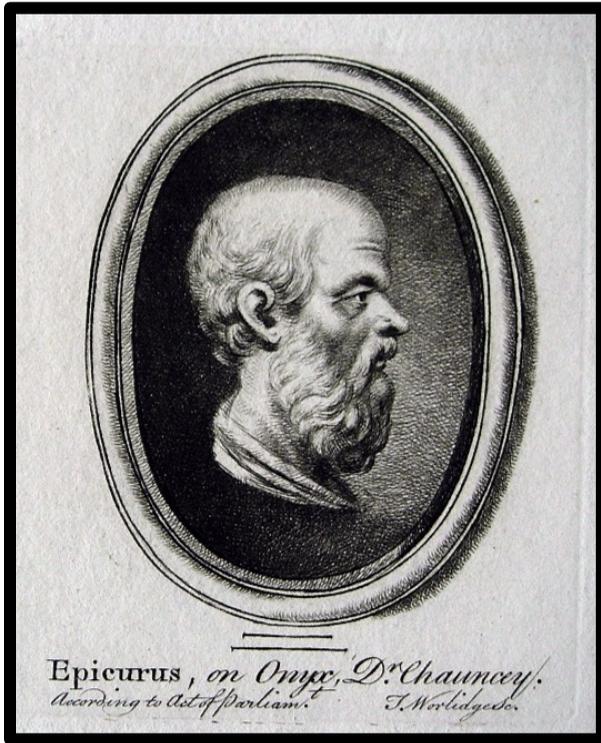


An  
Epicurean Gathering



Cambridge

# *An Epicurean Gathering*

---

¶ *Gathering around a table the Convenor begins by saying:*

Welcome. Your time will be pleasant here.

Here the highest good is pleasure which we seek through remembering and practising the four truths Epicurus taught us:

Don't fear god,  
Don't worry about death;  
What is good is easy to get, and  
What is terrible is easily to endure.<sup>i</sup>

¶ *Lighting a candle the Convenor continues with some words from Book III of Lucretius' "De Rerum Natura":*

In the murk of our darkness, you, Epicurus, raised your  
blazing  
lantern to show us the blessings of life. And we follow you,  
walking with confident footsteps the trails you have  
blazed,  
not to be your rival, but in admiration and love,  
and happy to have your example to guide us. [. . .]  
We begin to follow your thoughts, your arguments, and  
your reasons,  
and our mind's terrors abate, while the opaque walls of the  
world  
open wide to exhibit intricate actions and movements  
that go on all the time throughout the limitless void.<sup>ii</sup>

Epicurus taught that all our fears and terrors, all the darkness of our mind, would be dispelled, 'not by the sun's light of its rays' shafts, but by careful observation and understanding of inner laws of how nature works'<sup>iii</sup> and that true piety is 'to live

with a tranquil mind surveying whatever one sees with a steady, clear-eyed acceptance.’<sup>iv</sup>

With these things in mind we gather to together as friends to eat, to talk and reflect.

¶ *There follows a simple, shared meal of bread, cheese, wine and water. After the meal, using the following words from the opening of Epicurus’ “Letter to Menoeceus” someone introduces a reading from the works of Epicurus, Lucretius or any other author who encourages the leading of an Epicurean life:*

Let no one hesitate to study philosophy while young, and let no one tire of it when old, for it is never too soon nor too late to devote oneself to the well-being of the soul. Whoever says that the time for philosophy has not yet come or that it has already passed is saying that it is too soon or too late for happiness. Therefore both the young and the old should study philosophy so that, while old, we may still be young with all the joy we have gathered from the past; and while young, we may at the same time be old through fearlessness of the future.

¶ *A reading followed by a time of open conversation.*

¶ *Following the conversation the Convenor calls for a short moment of silence after which they conclude the gathering with words taken from Epicurus’ letter to Menoeceus:*

Practise these teachings daily and nightly; study them on your own or in the company of a like-minded friend and you shall not be disturbed while awake or asleep. You shall live like a god among humankind, because one who lives among immortal goods is in no respect like a mere mortal being.

Arranged by Andrew James Brown  
caute.brown@gmail.com  
<http://andrewjbrown.blogspot.com>

<sup>i</sup> Philodemus, Herculaneum Papyrus, 1005, 4.9-14

<sup>ii</sup> From DRN Book 3 trans. Slavitt, pp. 95-96

<sup>iii</sup> *Naturae species ratioque* – the outward face and inner-workings of nature.

<sup>iv</sup> From DRN Book 5 trans. Slavitt, pp. 237-238