A Study of Epicurean Philosophy

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Abstract—Epicurus is a founder of the ancient Greek philosopher, atheist, and Epicurean school. Epicurus was born in 341 BC in Samos, but both of his parents were Athenians. He moved to Athens at the age of 18 before moving to Asia Minor where he was influenced by the philosophy of Democritus. When AD 307, a school of schools was established by him in Athens, which had been active in Athens until his death. It is Legend that the school established in his house and courtyard, completely isolated from the outside world, so he was called "garden philosopher." It is said that at the courtyard entrance there is a sign saying, "Stranger, you will live a comfortable life here, and it is a matter of perfection to enjoy it."

Epicurus believed that the task of philosophy is to study the nature of nature, to eliminate religious superstition and to distinguish the boundaries of suffering and desire in order to obtain a happy life. Therefore, his philosophy can be divided into three parts: physics, norms (mainly on the issue of logic and epistemology) and ethics. Epicurus believes that feeling is the standard for judging truth, and feeling is direct. Error occurs only in the judgment of feeling. Although based on sensory experience, he affirmed the existence of objects, and further developed Democritus's Atomic Theory.

Keywords—Epicurean, Happiness, Criterion, Logic

I. LOGIC

Specifically, before discussing physics and ethics, Epicurus explored the standards of truth and the ways to gain knowledge. It is also known as the introduction to the Epicurean philosophy, which is called normology. First, he asked the source of knowledge. He believed that all propositions must be based on sensory perception; what we smell, see, and taste are true. "As pain, it is real and obvious. If you don't believe the feeling, then there is no knowledge at all." He believes that the illusion is not from the senses, but from the judgment, either the sensory or the image of the object is misinterpreted, or the object is mistakenly confused. Therefore, Epicurus believes that feeling is the standard for judging truth. The feeling is absolutely true, there is nothing to refute the feeling, one feeling can not refute another kind of feeling, because they are effective; a feeling can not refute another alien feeling, because the two distinguish objects. Reason can't refute feelings, because reason comes entirely from feelings. At the same time, he believes that foresight is a kind of grasp, true opinion, concept or general thought stored in the mind. It is a memory of external things. When we hear a noun, we will remember and think of his shape. If we don't know the shape of things first by foresight, we can't name things. In this way his thoughts are divided into the theoretical domain level, the feeling is the standard of truth, we know what we perceive, we foresee and have the right to foresee, things we have not seen are similar to what we see. In the field of practice, he believes that emotion is an inner feeling. Happiness and pain are two states that they manifest and two standards. Anything that causes happiness is good; what causes pain is bad. This exists in everything, one is appropriate for the creature and the other is hostile. What to choose and what to avoid is determined by them. On the whole, Epicurean's normology is sensory. He has a high evaluation of feelings and emotions, and is very demeaning to reason. This leaves a criticism for other scholars to criticize his norms without certainty. As far as I am concerned, Epicurus's standard of feeling is based on his higher moral foundation. From his own life, it is undoubtedly quiet and peaceful, enjoying true happiness, but many of his followers have misinterpreted his thoughts as hedonism or indulgence, and the days of living a beautiful dog are also safe. Therefore, I think that for a person with high moral cultivation, it is no problem to use his own feelings as a criterion, but if the moral cultivation is low, or the person is completely self-centered, Epicurus's feelings are not applicable to the whole. Social and other public.

II. PHYSICS

In physics, Epicurus tried to use physics to explain the world and beliefs in order to free people from false understandings, unnecessary worries and fears. He accepted Democritus's atomic view that all things in the world are composed of atoms and voids. He believes that the senses feel nothing more than material objects, only objects are real. If only objects exist, there will be no things that contain them or let them move. Therefore, there must be empty space. In this way, since there is nothing that can be absolutely created or destroyed, the origin, growth, change and elimination of objects can only be interpreted as the combination and separation of elements. He believes that these elements are very small and invisible, so they cannot be separated by physical methods, and cannot be destroyed or changed. Epicurus said that atoms depend on their own strength and are absolutely full, that is, there is no empty space; they are absolutely solid and cannot penetrate, cannot be broken or divided, and are therefore called atoms. He promoted Democritus's atomism and believed that each atom with the same shape is absolutely infinite in number, but the difference in shape is not absolutely infinite, but it is not counted. In this way, it overcomes the conflict between Democritus's "the difference in atomic shape is infinite, infinity, infinity" and "the atom is invisible and inseparable". After explaining the problem of atomic existence, Epicurus explained the reason of the atomic motion. He proposed that the atom has weight and is different. The heaviest atom and the lightest atom can also exist in the void, because there is With the weight, at the same atomic speed, the atom can thus achieve the falling motion in the void.
Democritus only admits that the atom is falling straight, and it is difficult to explain how the atoms collide with each other to form everything. Therefore, Epicurus adds the possibility of tilting motion to the atom based on its linear motion. Skew movements can also occur outside of motion, which explains why atomic collisions form everything. This view of his affirmation of the atomic spontaneity, on the one hand explains the contingency of the world, on the one hand provides a theoretical basis for the possibility of free will. His atomism is used to explain the formation of living things, saying that creatures originated in the earth and originally produced monsters, but the shape could not adapt to the environment, so they could not survive. Celestial bodies are also naturally generated, not God's creations. They have no soul, because the soul can only exist in living things. But he does not deny the existence of God, but he believes that God exists outside the world and has nothing to do with human beings. He denies and opposes God's role and arranges all ideas in the world. Because in his concept, God is extremely happy, why create a world? And where did God come to the idea of such a world? In the end, he thought that God is perfect, and how could he create such an imperfect world? In general, his physics thoughts gave people a clear definition of the world and the gods, clearing the obstacles to his happy ethics.

III. ETHICS

The core content of Epicurean thought is his ethics. On the basis of sensory norms and atomic physics, he transforms and exerts the happiness theory of the Cyrene School and puts forward that "Happiness is the starting point of a happy life." And the end point" claim. The happiness of Epicurus does not refer to the pleasure of debauchery and the joy of the flesh. His happiness refers to the painlessness of the body and the undisturbed soul. The happy life he described "is not an endless carnival, beauty, fish and other dishes on the table, but a clear reasoning, the reason for seeking and avoiding, and the exclusion of the notion of making the soul unsafe." In the context of the time, the reason why the Greek city-state residents felt the soul unrest was mainly from the fear of the gods and death. Epicurus believes that although God exists, it does not interfere with the life of the world as the average person imagines, so there is no need to fear. And for death, his point of view is even more amazing, and he proposed that death has nothing to do with us. Because "When we are alive, death has not yet arrived; when death comes, we are no longer there." So he believes that as long as wisdom is gained, people will neither dislike generation nor fear death. After the fear of the gods and death, people's eyes are on the present life, and what kind of life is the first problem. The idea put forward by Epicurus is to pursue happiness and pursue happiness. He said, "We believe that happiness is the beginning and the end of a happy life. We believe that it is the highest and the best of nature. We have various choices and avoidance from it. Our goal is to obtain it." Epicurus proposed The happiness to be pursued is natural and the highest good, but if there is no specific objective standard, it is easy to flow into the quagmire of hedonism and indulgence. Therefore, Epicurus distinguishes the relationship between desire and happiness. He does not all affirm his desire. Nor does it completely negate the desire. He advocates a correct understanding and distinction of desires, and then chooses. He said, "We must realize that some desires are natural and some desires are illusory. Some are necessary in natural desires, others are only natural." He separates desires from those necessary. Desire is summed up as the health of the body and the calm of the soul. He believes that the person who pursues this can correctly decide his choice and avoid, so that he can pursue true happiness or happiness.

IV. POLITICS

Based on the ethics of pursuing happiness, he put forward the idea of social contract theory. In his view, the state, the law, the justice, etc. are not imposed by external forces, nor are they absolutely eternal, but people agree with each other. He believes that justice is achieved by everyone who makes an agreement to prevent mutual harm based on their pursuit of happiness, that is, to ensure good health and peace of mind. This idea was absorbed and utilized by Marx and Engels. However, personal happiness as a guiding principle of politics will inevitably have many problems. In Epicurus's view, we are upright because it is good for ourselves. Integrity is not a bad thing in itself, but it is a bad thing to fall into the French Open, worry about punishment, and fear that it will be all day long. Such a view is inevitably suspected of making people morally down. Scholars believe that Epicurean's happy ethics is only personal happiness, not social welfare. The way to achieve happiness has nothing to do with social service and altruistic behavior, so Epicurus's political ideal can only be a leisurely intellectual class. Pleasant agreement, not a contract to help each other and save the poor.

REFERENCES