

Philosophy Session 3 – Report.

March 22 – 2022

Discussion on the philosophy of Epicurus (341 270 BCE)

This led down a number of paths:-

How did Epicurus define ‘happiness’ and is his definition valid in today’s world?

It depends on the individual. To some, it is having power, or excelling in something; to others it may be a quiet life – serving others – a warm family environment

Are ‘happiness’ and ‘joy’ the same? Dictionaries can differ on this.

Clear definitions are important for successful communications.

Anxiety is a barrier to the enjoyment of life – especially in young people re the future.

Short term anxiety is common – the ‘will I be late for work?’ type, but long term is different.

The covid pandemic has increased anxiety generally.

Those who have survived an earlier crisis are better equipped to cope with new ones.

Engaging in a physical activity or hobby can often give relief.

Panic attacks are another bar to happiness.

What is Truth? Opinions varied.

‘Truth is what I wanted as a child – but this changed as I gained experience’.

‘Truth is the end-product of a process, the steps to truth being:- Perception – Belief – Knowledge – Proof.’

‘Truth (to the individual) is whatever the individual believes it to be’.

(Convener’s Note: Truth is one of the central subjects in philosophy and one of the largest.

The ‘Correspondence’ theory of truth is that (in very simplistic terms) a belief is true if there is an existing fact that supports it; in the absence of such a fact the belief is false.

The ‘Coherence’ theory of truth asserts that (again, put simply) a belief is true if and only if it is part of a coherent system of beliefs.

The ‘Pragmatist’ theory of truth holds that ‘truth is the end of inquiry’

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) said that in his childhood he had accepted as true a large number of falsehoods.)

The nature of assumptions and propaganda were discussed, the general conclusion reached being that our beliefs are predominantly based on what we are told than on what we observe. It can be easy to accept what we hear from role models and from supposedly authoritative sources. We must be on guard against the often misleading information in such everyday sources as advertising, social media, and the internet – where opinion and even deliberate falsehoods may be presented as fact.

The session finished with random talk about ‘soul and body’, re-incarnation, and past personal experiences – subjects to be re-visited in coming sessions.

Session 4 date is Tuesday, April 12.

Convener: Keith Ashfold.

