

A New Reading of Epicurean`s View on Facing Death in the Modern World

Seyed Amirreza Mazari¹

Submitted:

2020/9/1

Accepted:

2020/12/5

Keywords:

Epicurean, argument therapy, the modern world, death.

Abstract: The purity of the ‘Pure Theory’ demands the separation of law from morality. Therefore, Kelsen tries to offer the ideal form of legal statements which are distinguishable from morality. In his traditional theory, with its substantial normativity, he sustains this independency by proposing the category of imputation as a conditional statement, as opposed to imperatives of morality. Here, norm addressees are authorities, not legal subjects. Nonetheless, the normativity of his positivism leads to deontic form of obligation which is univocal in both law and morality. It means that the basis of ‘ought’ in both fields is the rational necessitation which gives the basic norm – as a source of normativity of any legal system – a moral character. Kelsen was aware of the problem; hence his theory of empowerment. In the second theory, ‘ought’ has a meaning of competency to exercise power. Now, obligation is not more a first-hand concept in legal theory. Therefore, the ideal form of law is neither deontic nor imperative and norm addressees are authorities. Therefore, the form is the purest.

DOI: [10.30470/phm.2020.129720.1826](https://doi.org/10.30470/phm.2020.129720.1826)

Homepage: phm.znu.ac.ir

1. PhD of Kalam and Philosophy of Religion, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran, Iran, mazari.amir@gmail.com.

Introduction: One of the greatest human fears is the fear of death. Human beings have reacted to death differently in different periods. Since death shows the foundation of our existence and of those we love, we are afraid of death.

Epicurus and his disciples sought to show that the fear of death was irrational. The most important Epicurean argument was formulated in the form of two arguments, namely the timing puzzle and the symmetry argument.

At the heart of Epicurean thought, there is a fourfold cure: fear of the gods, fear of not achieving all happiness, fear of unfortunate events and calamities, and fear of death.

Findings: This study, historically investigating the understanding of death since the beginning of human creation, aims to analyze Epicurean approach in the modern era. In the modern age, dying has become a private matter, not a social one. In the Stone Age,

dying as a "worldly journey" began as a phenomenon that pervaded society. Every animal understands death. In this respect, human beings are no different from animals. With the advent of sedentism and as society shrank, notion of dying was centralized through focusing on the dying figure, surrounded by family and a select part of society. This was unlike the Stone Age, when the tribe or ethnic group or family was involved in the death of a person. For them, this was the "good death".

Urban development has allowed the death scene to be shared with more professionals and a smaller segment of society. Good deaths turned into managed deaths.

In many modern narratives, death is horrific. Controlling the death became a feature of the modern age. It is because this control began in the age of urbanization and became active as a mental concern as modernity spread in recent centuries.

Dying in the age of the urban world is becoming increasingly tragic and anti-social. While in

the Stone Age, it surrounded the whole community. Through the sedentism of a part of society and the urbanization of the family in the modern age, we see the methods of shameful deaths. In other words, the process of dying is no longer a priority, and liberation from death is necessarily a priority.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The Epicureans literally and mainly sought to eradicate fear of death as their moral project. From Epicurus' point of view, the main issue in life was the issue of pleasure and suffering.

In the Epicurean doctrine, correct thinking about death is the fundamental component of achieving a good life. In such a situation, we learn to stop in the wrong direction, not to stop paying attention to death. If we correct the way of thinking about death, we also think about living well. The end of this line of thought in Epicurus is institutionalized in the fourfold treatment (Warren,1296SH). Epicurus guarantees that by finding the roots of the four fears,

one can change one's view of the world. Eliminating the fear of death, then, is a key step towards achieving the purpose of human life.

The arguments of the timing puzzle and symmetry are for our better understanding of the harm of death. The advice of the Epicureans is to understand rationally that there is no fear of nothingness, and as a result, one can come to terms with mortality and live with this understanding. The Epicureans emphasize on the absence of pain and believe that the absence of pain and injury are in themselves a great pleasure. The original way is to think rationally about the fear of death and to find pleasure.

Epicurus first invites man to be aware of the "fear of death" and then tries, with his arguments, to understand rationally (which is at the heart of the argument) that there is no fear.

According to Epicurus's doctrine, philosophy is one of the tangible tools for life. Philosophy in this sense is not merely a way to seek a good life, but also a real way to achieve it (Carel,1394SH).

This article tries to indicate:

- 1) Fear of death is the greatest and most terrifying fear for human beings.
- 2) Epicurus, as an ancient philosopher, states that death is nothing to us.
- 3) Epicurus invites man to understand the sufferings of life by reasoning.
- 4) Reasoning can be hindered in the modern age. Misconceptions stem from radicalized values in the modern age.
- 5) Philosophers critical of the Epicureans and, consequently, modern man, equate death with being dead and then think that being dead is harmful and, therefore, they fear death.

References:

- Bakewell, Sarah(1397SH). How to Live: A Life of Montaigne in one question and twenty attempts at an answer. Translated by: Maryam Taghdisi. Tehran: Qoqnoos.
- Carel, Havi(1394SH). Illness: The Cry of the Flesh. Translated by: Ehsan Kiyanikhah. Tehran: Goman Pub.
- Critchley, Simon(1397SH). Very Little ... Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature. Translated by: Lila Koochekmanesh. Tehran: Nashreney.
- Epicurus. (1940). Letter to Menoeceus, Trans. C. Bailey, The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers, edited and with introduction by Whitney J. Oates. N.Y: The Modern Library
- Furley, D.J. (1986). Nothing to Us? In Scofield and Striker and Striker.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg(1392SH). The enigma of Death: The art healing in a scientific age. In Death(A Collection of Article). Translated by: Ali Malaek. Tehran: Chapnashr.
- Karpf, Anne(1394SH). How to Age. Translated by: Memaz Shirazi Adl. Tehran : Hanooz Pub.
- Kellehear, Allan(1397SH). A Social History of Dying. Translated by: Qhasem Daliri. Tehran. Qoqnoos.
- Nagel, Thomas(1397SH). Mortal Question. Translated by : Mostafa Malekian and Javad Heydari. Tehran : Negahe Moaser Publishing House.
- Norbert, Elias(1398SH). The Loneliness of the Dying. Translated by: Omid Mehrgan and Saleh Najafi. Tehran:
- Nussbaum, Martha C. (1997) .The Therapy of Desire, Princeton university press. New jersey.
- May, Todd(1392SH). Death. Translated by : Reza Alizadeh. Tehran: Goman pub.
- Philodemus. (2009) .On Death. trans&into¬ed by

- Benjamin Henry. Society of Biblical literature. Atlanta. USA.
- Rosenbaum, Stephen E. (1986). How to Be Dead and Not Care: A Defense of Epicurus. Reprinted by permission from American Philosophical Quarterly 23.no 2:21725.
 - Scarre, Geoffrey. (2007). Death, Acumen Publishing Limited.
 - Walter, Tony. (2020). Death in The Modern World. SAGE Publications Ltd.
 - Warren, James. (1396SH). Facing Death: Epicurus and his critics. Translated by :Mohamad Amar Mofid. Tehran: Molapub.