



Mains Practice Question

Q. All human beings aspire for happiness. Do you agree? What does happiness mean to you? Explain with examples. (150 Words)

30 Sep, 2021 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Start with the concept of happiness as given by Epicurean.
- Discuss what happiness means to you.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Epicurus regarded pursuit of happiness as the chief aim of life. Happiness is an end by itself, and it is the only good. Pain is the only evil. For Epicureans, morality becomes an activity which gives pleasure. Virtue has no intrinsic value; it derives value from the pleasure which accompanies virtuous actions.

There are three states Epicurus considered to constitute happiness.

1. Factors for Happiness
2. Tranquility Freedom from fear (ataraxia)
3. Absence of bodily pain (aponia)

Body

- A good part of Epicureanism consists in elaborating or clarifying the various aspects of happiness. Happiness does not mean momentary physical or mental pleasure. Happiness is joy which lasts for the whole life. Men should avoid momentary pleasures which may often lead to greater pains later.
- They should not be slaves to particular pleasures and desires. They have to master their passions. They need to abandon present pleasures which lead to future pain, and be ready to undergo present pain for sake of future joy.
- However, the Epicurean conception of happiness is often called negative. Happiness is neither active joy nor tingling excitement. Epicureanism sought rather an absence of pain, mental serenity and calm spirit untroubled by fears and anxieties. Absence of pain is in itself pleasure, indeed in the ultimate analysis the truest pleasure." Active joy is beyond human reach; man should avoid pain and lead a quiet and contented life.

Important is to keep a balanced perspective

- Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you do not have; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for.
- He who is not satisfied with a little is satisfied with nothing.
- We don't develop courage by being happy in our relationships every day. We develop it by surviving difficult times and challenging adversity.

- We must, therefore, pursue the things that make for happiness, seeing that when happiness is present, we have everything; but when it is absent we do everything to possess it.
- Be moderate in order to taste the joys of life in abundance.

Conclusion

In the words of Gandhi ji, happiness is when what you think, what you say and what you do are in harmony.

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