

Recommendations for Happy Living

Post by “Don” of November 21, 2021 at 7:14 AM

Interestingly, Epicurus doesn't seem to refer to ethics and morals but just and unjust actions. I did a quick search for ηθικός (ēthikos - same word for ethics/morals) in Diogenes Laërtius's Book X on Epicurus and the only instances are where someone is talking about Epicurus, not from his own writing. Even the translation is misleading. Epicurus's Περί Τέλος (Peri Telos) is translated in the Perseus Digital Library as "On the Ethical End" but ethical is chosen by the translator. Telos is goal, fulfillment, etc. That modifier ethical doesn't occur in the Greek. And, as I understand, ηθικός is simply the "right" way to live, to conduct one's life. So, I'm sure the word shows up in Epicurus's writings, but it seems to me that he was much more concerned with just and unjust rather than what we would characterize as moral/immoral or ethical/unethical.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

In the end much of the pain that can be expected to come from hurting other people depends on the circumstance that we can expect that others will punish us for that action, and if we have reason to expect that we will not be punished, that motivation will not exist.

I would also add that, in a society or community, even if the person harming other people is sociopathic and feels no remorse or anxiety, we - as members of society- have put in structures and "contracts" to deal with "injustice" to keep ourselves safe.