

PD34 - How Does PD 34 Relate to PD 32 As To The Nature of Justice?

Post by "Cassius" of December 8, 2018 at 9:28 PM

Here is a very general point that applies to the first part of 34 -- "injustice is not an evil in itself" -- that's hugely important on it's own, but it is really nothing more than application of the physics that there are no eternal rules or supernatural gods dictating what is "good" and "evil" in itself. Ultimately Nature has only given us pleasure and pain by which to judge what is desirable and what is not, so neither "injustice" or anything else is "evil" in itself, with the closest to "evil in itself" being only pain, which is always undesirable, and yet sometimes we even choose that in order to gain greater pleasure or avoid worse pain.

So the main point -- injustice is not evil in itself - stands alone, with the rest of the explanation of why injustice is "evil" or "undesirable" being to point out that the undesirability comes from other factors besides supernatural prohibition or violation of any kind of absolute rules.

As for how it relates to 32, 32 is supporting the point that what we consider to be "just" and "unjust can be judged only in terms of whether there are breaches of agreement, because there are no supernatural or absolute obligations which can be breached.

One more point -- That's why I think that the 12 Fundamentals of Nature should always be included in discussion of the 40 Doctrines. What we are discussing here derives directly from the Epicurean physics, which confirms the nature of the universe as natural, and eliminates the possibility of supernatural or universally absolute law. If you try to divorce the discussion of justice from the nature of the universe as if they were separable, you tear away the support and foundation of the conclusion, and leave it dangling and appearing to be arbitrary.

Post by "Cassius" of December 9, 2018 at 12:02 PM

Also:

Couple of things there -- to some extent some animals *can* make "compacts" with us, so that needs to be considered. Even to those animals that aren't subject to domestication or similar "compacts" there will still be a significant issues of pleasure and pain, just as you suggest. So again the main point is that there may be many ramifications to consider in dealing with a

particular biting dog, but those ramifications do not include any concept of "justice" tied to supernatural beings or absolute standards of morality.

As to whether a particular action with a particular animal will lead to greater long-term pleasure or less long-term pain, that's going to be like most decisions -- subject to the circumstances and conditions then and there existing. I suspect your suggestion makes a lot of sense in most cases we ordinarily confront, but I would suggest also that it's generally dangerous to prejudge whether forgiveness or punishment is more likely to be the best course. That's because if you overgeneralize you are skirting near the error of thinking there is an absolute rule. It's always important to know the facts and not let rule-making get too abstract.

Post by "Cassius" of December 9, 2018 at 12:02 PM

Someone asked me: Cassius, does the term compact = consent to you? 36 suggests to me that, although many people consent or compact with a State Government, there are minorities in that territory, which do not give consent or compact to the State government, thus are facing an injustice?

Here's my response:

Let's see -- thinking back to the prior statement in 32 as a starting point".....and likewise for those peoples who either could not or WOULD NOT not form binding agreements not to inflict nor suffer harm." In your question, you are talking about the common situation where not everyone agrees to the form of government. If they withhold their consent, then they withhold their consent, and the issue is what to label the situation. I think what Epicurus is saying that "justice" is a term that applies only to people who have consented to an arrangement. So in an example where there is a minority which does not agree to an arrangement, they will presumably react in various stages from silence to full-blown revolution, but whatever that reaction is, it is not something to be analyzed in terms of "justice or injustice." Meaning they should revolt or not, as they determine is best for them, but in doing so they do not appeal to "justice" as their reasoning, but to other factors, presumably their own view of the best way to their own happiness, which is all the justification they need in Epicurean terms.

Now if they originally agreed, but then withdraw their consent, then that might be closer to "injustice," but I also think that what they should do would hinge on the circumstances, because Epicurus makes clear that when circumstances change, then the aspects of "justice" change to.

In the end it seems "justice" appears to Epicurus to be just a variation of what we might consider to be contract law. Breach of contract is considered to be "unjust" in contract terms,

but for those who have never entered a contract in the first place, there can be no breach. Which is as it should be, because that's the way Epicurus views all "virtues" such as "justice" - either they are instrumental toward happiness, or they are largely worthless.

Post by "Cassius" of December 9, 2018 at 12:29 PM

I think most of us would agree that this analysis of "justice" is largely foreign to modern minds. We tend to think there is something called "justice" floating in the air, which is absolute and to which we can look for sanction or disapproval of our actions. But there's no such thing as absolute justice anymore than there is "divine law," or Platonic "ideal forms," or Aristotelian "essences."

Post by "Cassius" of December 9, 2018 at 1:51 PM

It might be asked: "If justice applies to people who consent, why would it not be seen as injustice to enforce rule over those that do not consent? Or does justice not apply to compact/consent at all?"

I don't think enforcing a rule over those who do not consent would be a matter of justice, would it? Probably that would be called "force" or something like that, but if the people involved have never consented to the agreement, then forcing them to do something is not a matter of "justice" at all, would it be? The point being that unless there has first been consent to an agreement, "justice" is not something that has any application, because unless there has first been an agreement to bring into relevance a discussion of justice, then "justice" does not apply, as it does not exist in the air.

Also: "So if injustice is a term applied to those who withdrew consent, the individual who never consented to a compact could claim fault with an authoritarian system, but cannot claim it as "injustice" but rather must define the specific acts, like extortion or aggression etc.?"

Yes that is the way that I see Epicurus' formulation applying. By no means am I suggesting that the person who never consented should not act to revolt against the authoritarian system, I am suggesting that the person who revolts should not view his actions in the prism of "justice" because that is a limited abstract construction. The true and real analysis of all that matters in life is considered in terms of pleasure, pain, an