

# Pagagiotopoulous - Thomas Jefferson "I too am an Epicurean": His life and his inspiration from the Ancient Greeks

Post by "Cassius" of March 20, 2021 at 10:26 AM

As to the issue of Epicurean philosophy and how Epicureans would/do deal with difficult ethical issues, a similar question [being discussed here](#) makes me think of [this recent post by Elli](#):



I don't know any of the details of this but [reading about it sounds pretty awful!](#) I guess that is one reason we in America don't get taught much about this today - it doesn't sound like Greece's allies in the west were much help to it.

So this is another example of something horrible people do to each other, but just like slavery, can we say that such actions are "condemned by god" or "condemned by nature" or "by nature evil" or similar formulations?

Can we say with absolute certainty that there could be no consistent Epicureans mixed in among the Turks behind the genocidal wars and population "exchange"?

Can we even say that such a thing could never find any justification under Epicurean philosophy?

If we really take to heart that there are no absolutes, then the issue of evaluating this, like every other question, comes down to the practical concerns that if the aggressor side decides to undertake this kind of project, then it better expect hard pushback from its neighbors, and it might well be in the situation referenced in the Epicurean texts about never being able to sleep well again in fear of retribution.

But if the retribution never comes? If the aggressors decide that any loss of sleep was well worth the result in clearing the countryside of hated enemies?

If we are going to be consistent (and I think Epicurus would expect us to be) we have to admit that there is no argument from "Natural sanction" or absolute virtue to sanction our condemnation of the aggressors in situations like this. And I admit also that it is frequently difficult even to determine who the "aggressors" really are!

So as I see it the practical result of thinking about issues like this is that everyone has to make up their own mind exactly how outraged by things like this that they are, because if outrages are going to be stopped, its going to be by real people taking real action (often by force) to vindicate the point, because just talking about "gods" and "heaven" and "hell" and throwing around words like "evil" and "depraved" do nothing for the victims, and just expose those who do that as hopeless dreamers.

[Elli](#) I hope I did not take your post out of context but it seemed like a good illustration.