

Exploration of Epicurean Concepts of Justice, Contracts, & Not to Harm or Be Harmed

Post by "Don" of December 31, 2021 at 8:00 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

But not a direct synonym for pain?

Unless that word is more etymologically helpful then "harm" is going to be just as ephemeral as "Justice" itself.

Pain means something we can understand clearly, but "harm"?

Pain doesn't even enter into it, and there's no clear etymology for βλάπτω. It is definitely not connected to "feel pain" or "cause pain" or anything similar. It conveys hindering, damaging hurting, robbing, etc. "Natural justice is an agreement not to hurt or to be hurt."

This is also one of the PDs that, from my perspective, is better read as part of a paragraph with the following ones, not as some stand-alone aphorism.

From Nate's compilation:

"Natural justice is a covenant of what is suitable for leading men to avoid injuring onanother, and being injured." Yonge (1853)

"Natural justice is a contract of expediency, to prevent one man from harming or being harmed by another." Hicks (1910)

"Natural justice is a symbol or expression of expediency, to prevent one man from harming or being harmed by another." Hicks (1925)

"The justice which arises from nature is a pledge of mutual advantage to restrain men from harming one another and save them from being harmed." Bailey (1926)

"The justice of Nature is a covenant of advantage to the end that men shall not injure one another nor be injured." De Witt, Epicurus and His Philosophy (1954)

"Natural justice is a compact resulting from expediency by which men seek to prevent one man from injuring others and to protect him from being injured by them." Geer (1964)

"Nature's justice is a guarantee of utility with a view to not harming one another and not being harmed." Long, The Hellenistic Philosophers 125 (1987)

“Natural justice is a pledge guaranteeing mutual advantage, to prevent one from harming others and to keep oneself from being harmed.” O'Connor (1993)

“The justice of nature is a pledge of reciprocal usefulness, [i.e.,] neither to harm one another nor be harmed.” Inwood & Gerson (1994)

“Natural justice is the advantage conferred by mutual agreements not to inflict nor allow harm.” Anderson (2004)

“Natural justice is an expression of the <natural> interest <everyone has> and consists in both: a) not causing harm to others, and b) not suffering harm for oneself.” Makridis (2005)

“Natural justice is a covenant for mutual benefit, to not harm one another or be harmed.” Saint-Andre (2008)

“The justice that seeks nature's goal is a utilitarian pledge of men not to harm each other or be harmed.” Strodach (2012)

“Natural justice is a pledge of the advantage associated with preventing men from harming or being harmed by one another.” Mensch (2018)

“Nature's justice is a token [or pledge] of something that promotes not harming one another or being harmed.” White (2021)