

Welcome Kungi!

Post by "Cassius" of July 25, 2022 at 12:30 PM

[Quote from Kungi](#)

As far as I interpret PD5 there is no difference between Stoicism and Epicureanism in regard to the connection between virtue and the pleasurable life. The difference lies only in the goal.

Ah but that is such a huge difference, and the "only" can make it appear that the difference is slight. Further, the essential point is that the goal of life is pleasure, then what makes up each of the virtues turns on what is in fact successful living that pleasurable life, not the standard definition of those virtues given by the ancient Stoics. As I see it, the definition and role of "virtue" in Epicureanism could not be more different from that of the Stoics. You will not in fact know what is virtuous from what is the reverse of each of those virtues unless you judge them from the perspective: "Do they lead to pleasure?"

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

I would say that the Epicurean "moral path" or the best way to live, is to consider one's actions carefully, because if you cause harm to others, then that leads to many bad results 1) the harmed person will seek justice. 2) there will be a loss of trust, because others will no longer trust you. 3) if you do things repeatedly which harm others, then you could create habits of acting or thinking which eventually will catch up with you (as in the previous two points). So the Epicurean is motivated by what creates the best life, and not by some abstract rule of right or wrong.

I agree with that, but I think to be clear there is also something like a (4) to the effect that if you harm others, you may be forced into taking action to prevent them from harming you in return, which you may or may not want to do. In other words, the meaning of "harm" needs to be very clear. Sometimes you are going to restrain others from harming you, as Torquatus says, and in the case of those who are unwilling or unable to enter into no-harm agreements with you, there is no "justice" involved, and you act in accord to your interests, which may or may not involve violence.

There is no "non-violence principle" in Epicurean philosophy such as Libertarians assert in their viewpoint. If you choose to engage in violence for reasons that you deem satisfactory, you simply have to be aware of the possibility or likelihood of blowback, and make your decisions accordingly.

I say this mainly to emphasize the point that I have seen libertarians draw the line on, because they hold to an absolute non-initiation of violence principle. I would argue that there are no such absolute principles in Epicurean philosophy of any kind - there are simply sets of circumstances which you must navigate and ask yourself always "What will happen if I engage in this course and what will not." There is no absolute morality of any kind in Epicurus other than that Nature gives all living things the goal of pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. There are no absolute rights and wrongs that apply to humans any more than in the animal world, where killing is a way of life. Humans, however, have the ability to enter agreements that are mutually beneficial and lead to much better results for all concerned, and that is something that would normally always be preferred. But even there, there are no supernatural gods or enforcing mechanisms that say something is right or wrong -- there is no set of defined "Natural Laws."