

Episode 159 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 13 - Chapter 7 - The Canon Reason and Nature 04

Post by "Cassius" of February 5, 2023 at 4:08 PM

I just finished listening to this episode and I think it is a very good one with lots of thought-provoking discussion. I am not so sure that we ended on as quite as clear a note as we might have, however, on "natural law," so i will see if we can revisit that as we proceed through Chapter 8.

I can see a casual listener wondering how we reconcile the emphasis on nature providing the norm with the cautions about "natural law" at the end. I think the points Joshua raised were correct, but we might need to go back and hit that point again. The point we want to make seems to be (to me) that it is correct to look to Nature in some ways but not in others. It is correct to look to Nature in following the guides of pleasure and pain given us as natural faculties, but it is incorrect to project on Nature a form of "reason" or "logic" and try to deduce from existing circumstances that those circumstances were somehow blessed as "correct" by Nature.

I think we were pretty clear in focusing on the problem rearing its head mainly in societies trying to use "natural law" to enact legislation that applies to all people at all time and all places, which is contrary to the observation that individuals vary widely in what they find pleasurable and painful.

However I can see the possibility that listeners might think we were trying to have our cake and eat it too at the end of the podcast.

I think it is only natural that we would come back to these issues anyway as we go through Chapter 8, but if anyone has any comments on this please comment in this thread and we will incorporate that as we go forward.