

Epicurean Golden Rule?

Post by “Joshua” of July 6, 2023 at 5:45 PM

Quote

There remains a twofold question:

Are there (in the classical Epicurean corpus) any similar affirmative statements on: 1) where reasonably possible, to prevent or stop wrongful harm from being done to another (particularly someone outside our immediate friendship circle); and 2) to foster social conditions that are conducive to maximizing the possibility for enjoyment/pleasure by most people (including those that may be on the socioeconomic margins)?

Now these are somewhat more interesting questions at least to me. Per usual with Epicurus we are left with observations rather than commandments, as here;

Quote

[PD39](#): He who best knew how to meet fear of external foes made into one family all the creatures he could; and those he could not, he at any rate did not treat as aliens; and where he found even this impossible, he avoided all association, and, so far as was useful, kept them at a distance.

And here;

Quote

Diogenes of Oenoanda: So (to reiterate what I was saying) observing that these people are in this predicament, I bewailed their behaviour and wept over the wasting of their lives, and I considered it the responsibility of a good man to give benevolent assistance, to the utmost of one's ability, to those of them who are well-constituted. This is the first reason for the inscription.

Diogenes of Oenoanda is generally the most explicit when it comes to answering your questions, [Pacatus](#).

Quote

I wanted, before being overtaken by death, to compose a fine anthem to celebrate the fullness of pleasure and so to help now those who are well-constituted. Now, if only one

person or two or three or four or five or six or any larger number you choose, sir, provided that it is not very large, were in a bad predicament, I should address them individually and do all in my power to give them the best advice. But, as I have said before, the majority of people suffer from a common disease, as in a plague, with their false notions about things, and their number is increasing (for in mutual emulation they catch the disease from one another, like sheep) moreover, it is right to help also generations to come (for they too belong to us, though they are still unborn) and, besides, love of humanity prompts us to aid also the foreigners who come here.