

Episode 182 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 34 - Chapter 14 - The New Virtues 02

Post by "Cassius" of July 7, 2023 at 5:15 PM

Welcome to Episode 182 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the only complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world. Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at EpicureanFriends.com, where you will find a discussion thread for each of our podcast episodes and many other topics. We are now in the process of a series of podcasts intended to provide a general overview of Epicurean philosophy based on the organizational structure employed by Norman DeWitt in his book "Epicurus and His Philosophy."

This week we continue our discussion of Chapter 14, entitled "The New Virtues."

Chapter XIV - The New Virtues

- Justice
- Honesty
- Faith
- Love of Mankind
- Friendship
- Suavity
- Considerateness
- Hope
- Attitude Toward the Present
- Gratitude
- Gratitude to Teachers
- Gratitude to Nature
- Gratitude To Friends
- Fruits Of Gratitude

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/56107542>

Post by "Cassius" of July 9, 2023 at 7:01 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3174-episode-182-epicurus-and-his-philosophy-part-34-chapter-14-the-new-virtues-02/>

When we get to Honesty DeWitt quotes:

"In his book On Kingship he even advised monarchs to entertain themselves with military anecdotes or coarse buffoonery rather than try to counterfeit a refinement they did not possess. This advice must have been galling to young Platonists who groomed themselves for court appointments. It was galling to Plutarch, who reports it."

Here's the Perseus link to the Greek, but if they have the English I can't find the link:

[Plutarch, Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum, stephpage 1095c](#)

It doesn't seem easy to find an English translation of Non Posse so this is something we need to fix.

Edit: - http://demonax.info/doku.php?id=te...ine_of_epicurus

Edit2 - I have posted a copy of the Demonax version here. We need to clean this up over time as the formatting is off and the page numbers do not match how DeWitt quote it.: [Plutarch: That it is Not Possible to Live Pleasurably According to the Doctrine of Epicurus](#) If we can find a better public domain copy we can substitute it, or add the correct line numbers to this version.

Thanks to Don (see his post below):

As to the other delights of the mind, we have already treated of them, as they occurred to us. But their aversedness and dislike to music, that affords us so great delights and such charming satisfactions, a man could not forget if he would, by reason of the inconsistency of what Epicurus saith, when he pronounceth in his book called his Doubts that his wise man ought to be a lover of public spectacles and to delight above any other man in the music and shows of the Bacchanals; and yet he will not admit of music problems or of the critical enquiries of philologists, no, not so much as at a comotation. Yea, he advises such princes as are lovers of the Muses rather to entertain themselves at their feasts either with some narration of military adventures or with the importune scurrilities of drolls and buffoons, than to engage in disputes about music or in questions of poetry. For this very thing he had the face to write in his treatise of Monarchy, as if he were writing to Sardanapalus, or to Nanarus satrap of Babylon. For neither would a Hiero nor an Attalus nor an Archelaus be persuaded to make a Euripides, a Simonides, a Melanippides, a Crates, or a Diodotus rise up from their tables, and to place such scaramuchios in their rooms as a Cardax, an Agrias, or a Callias, or fellows like Thrasonides and Thrasyleon, to make people disorder the house with hollowing and clapping. Had the great Ptolemy, who was the first that formed a consort of musicians, but met with these excellent and royal admonitions, would he not, think you, have thus addressed himself to the Samians:

Quote

O Muse, whence art thou thus maligned?

Post by “Don” of July 9, 2023 at 7:32 AM

<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a2008.01.0395>

Edit:

[Plutarch, Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum, section 13](#)

Post by “Cassius” of July 14, 2023 at 9:31 PM

Episode will be posted soon. In the meantime, here is a quote from Cicero that I referenced as an example of the "absolute" form of justice which Epicurus rejected, and is almost the exact opposite of the viewpoint stated in the last ten [Principal Doctrines](#).

"True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrong-doing by its prohibitions. And it does not lay its commands or prohibitions upon good men in vain, although neither have any effect on the wicked. It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to attempt to repeal a part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by Senate or People, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times, and there will be one master and ruler, that is, God, over us all, for He is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst penalties, even if he escapes what is commonly called punishment . . ."

-- Marcus Tullius Cicero, Republic, The Laws,

Post by “Cassius” of July 14, 2023 at 10:22 PM

Episode 182 of the Lucretius Today Podcast is now available!

This week: Justice!

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3174-episode-182-epicurus-and-his-philosophy-part-34-chapter-14-the-new-virtues-02/>

Post by “Don” of July 15, 2023 at 12:25 PM

It's important in [PD31](#) to go back to the original text to see what connotations those words in "neither harm nor be harmed" have.

Τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιόν ἐστι σύμβολον τοῦ συμφέροντος εἰς τὸ μὴ βλάπτειν ἀλλήλους μηδὲ βλάπτεσθαι.

"To neither 'harm' others nor be 'harmed' oneself."

The word used is βλάπτειν and βλάπτεσθαι from βλάπτω

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, βλάπτω](#)

and

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon, βλάπτω](#)

Note that at the second link above, βλάπτω: "after Hom. to damage, hurt, mar, opp. to wilful wrong (ἀδικεῖν)"

That inclusion of ἀδικεῖν is very interesting, especially since it is literally what we would translate as "unjust" ἀ + δικεῖν.

ἀδικεῖν:

[Greek Word Study Tool](#)

That definition includes:

Quote

to be ἄδικος, do wrong (defined by Arist.Rh.1368b6 τὸ βλάπτειν ἐκόντα παρὰ τὸν νόμον, cf. ἀδίκημα], τῶν ἀδικησάντων τίσις ἔσσειται" those who have sinned, h.Cer.367; freq. in Hdt. and Att.; τὰδικεῖν wrong-doing, S.Ant.1059; τὸ μὴ ἀδικεῖν righteous dealing, A.Eu.85,749:— in legal phrase, do wrong in the eye of the law, the particular case being added in part., as "Σωκράτης ἀ. . . ποιῶν . . . καὶ διδάσκων" Pl.Ap.19b, cf. X.Mem.1.1.1: c. acc. cogn., ἀδικίαν, ἀδικήματα, etc., Pl.R.344c, 409a, cf.

Arist.Rh.1389b7; also “ἀ. οὐδὲν ἄξιον δεσμοῦ” Hdt.3.145; ἀ. πολλά, μεγάλα, etc., Pl.Smp.188a, al.; οὐδέν, μηδέν ἀ. ib., al.:—“ἀ. περὶ τὰ μυστήρια” D.21.175, cf. IG2.811c154; ἀ. εἰς πόλιν, κτήμα, Lib. Or.15.39, 31.7:—in games or contests, play foul, Ar.Nu.25, Arist. EN1123b32.

That section that is "defined by Arist.Rh.1368b6) refers to:

[Quote from Aristotle, Rhetoric 1368b](#)

after we have first defined acting unjustly.

Let injustice, then, be defined as voluntarily causing injury contrary to the law. Now, the law is particular or general. By particular, I mean the written law in accordance with which a state is administered; by general, the unwritten regulations which appear to be universally recognized. Men act voluntarily when they know what they do, and do not act under compulsion. What is done voluntarily is not always done with premeditation; but what is done with premeditation is always known to the agent, for no one is ignorant of what he does with a purpose. note The motives which lead men to do injury and commit wrong actions are depravity and incontinence. For if men have one or more vices, it is in that which makes him vicious that he shows himself unjust; for example, the illiberal in regard to money, the licentious in regard to bodily pleasures, the effeminate in regard to what makes for ease, note the coward in regard to dangers, for fright makes him desert his comrades in peril; the ambitious in his desire for honor, the irascible owing to anger, one who is eager to conquer in his desire for victory, the rancorous in his desire for vengeance; the foolish man from having mistaken ideas of right and wrong, the shameless from his contempt for the opinion of others. Similarly, each of the rest of mankind is unjust in regard to his special weakness.

So both Epicurus (or the Epicurean composer of the Kuriai Doxai, to hedge my bets) and Aristotle decided to use βλάπτω to define ἀδικεῖν!

"voluntarily causing injury (βλάπτω) contrary to the law. = τὸ βλάπτειν ἐκόντα παρὰ τὸν νόμον."

With both Aristotle and Epicurus using βλάπτω, they both recognize there is importance in the "voluntarily causing injury." Aristotle seems to ascribe more importance to the actions contrariness to the law, although he does state that there is also "unwritten regulations which appear to be universally recognized." Epicurus, on the other hand, seems to be more interested in the "contract" the συμφέροντος which is directly related to words that mean:

confer a benefit

be useful or profitable

useful, expedient, fitting, advantage

and so on...

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, συμφέρω](#)

Epicurus seems more concerned with the usefulness or benefit of the agreement/contract/etc. than what the "letter of the law" is in a certain time and place.

I would *begin* to try to translate [PD31](#) as:

The justice of nature (i.e., what is naturally just) is an agreement of mutual benefit between or among people to not voluntarily harm each other nor to not be harmed oneself deliberately by others actions.

This way, it rules out accidents and similar calamities. Epicurus wants to say that being harmed in a flood or killed by a wild animal cannot be claimed to be just or unjust. "To not be harmed" does not mean in any sense that you will never be injured or hurt. It all goes back to those voluntary actions for which we must take responsibility.

Post by "Cassius" of July 15, 2023 at 12:42 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

(Saving to forum to edit on laptop instead of phone 😊 be patient.... More to come)

Ha -i was gonna grumble that he never tells us what he thinks himself is the right translation 😊

Post by "Joshua" of July 19, 2023 at 7:15 PM

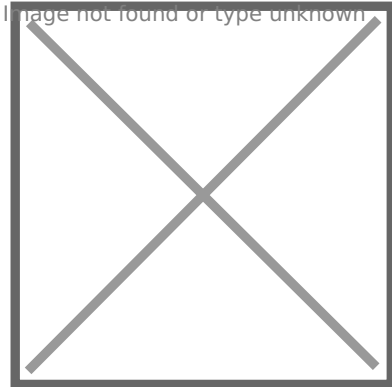
Are children born in a state of original honesty?

We didn't cover this very deeply, but there are excellent reasons for thinking that it's true. Everyone has experienced those moments when children say things that adults have been educated or conditioned or cultured into believing are tactless, rude, or unmentionable.

"Kids say the darnedest things" is a common phrase in America, but the question seldom asked is "why?"

Kids are honest, I think, because they have not yet been convinced of the perceived (and sometimes appropriate) need to lie.

Anyway, here is a study into the perception of judges to ascertain their views on the reliability of eye witnesses.



[Judges Think Children More Honest But Less Reliable Than Adults, Says Queen's Study](#)

Judges perceive child witnesses as being more honest than adults when testifying in court, but recognize that children's limited memory and communication...

www.sciencedaily.com

The conclusion: "Judges Think Children More Honest But Less Reliable Than Adults".

Post by "Don" of July 19, 2023 at 9:01 PM

Piggybacking on Joshua's post:

<https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/why-kids-lie>

Quote

So, the first time that a parent catches a child in a lie, it may come as an unpleasant surprise, but psychological research has found that lying is a normal part of childhood. In fact, it's a developmental milestone. It's only possible once children have developed some self-control and the ability to understand another person's mental state.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/decept...ish%20to%20dogs>.

Quote

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3174-episode-182-epicurus-and-his-philosophy-part-34-chapter-14-the-new-virtues-02/>

Many animals carry out disinformation campaigns aimed at others, within and across species. They mislead, cheat and lie in rampant acts of deception.

Moral of that second article: Humans are not special 😄