

Epicurean Perspectives on Cultural Conflict

Post by “Cassius” of March 26, 2019 at 2:33 PM

"As an Epicurean, I'd have gladly lived in the Islamic world over Judeo-Christian world."

I thumbs-upped that last post but I should clarify on the last sentence that it would depend a lot on the particular circumstances of the jews/christians/muslims involved ! 😊

Post by “Daniel” of March 27, 2019 at 12:22 PM

[Quote from Oscar](#)

As an Epicurean, I'd have gladly lived in the Islamic world over Judeo-Christian world.



I couldn't disagree more with you on this point, Oscar.

All three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) have had to confront the ideas of Ancient Greece. Averroes tried to integrate Aristotle with Islam. Maimonides tried to integrate Aristotle with Judaism. Aquinas tried to integrate Aristotle with Christianity. All necessarily failed. Rationality cannot be integrated with faith; nor reason with anti-reason; nor, in philosophy, fact with fantasy.

In conquering parts of the Byzantine Empire, Arabs encountered Greek thought. Muslim scholars studied and were fascinated by the writings of Aristotle and translated them into Arabic. Avicenna and Averroes were superlative Aristotle scholars. The Arabs learned the method of observation-based rationality and, in a true golden age, made superb contributions to medicine, astronomy, mathematics, literature, and other fields. But it did not last. Due to the influence of Al-Ghazali and other reason-rejecting theologians, as well as a fundamentalism firmly entrenched in Islamic culture from its outset, faith ultimately crushed freedom of thought. Under orthodox Islam, the books of Avicenna, Averroes, and other great thinkers were burned in the 12th century. For eight hundred years since, the Islamic world has wallowed in a dark age.

Renan was the first to establish a connection between religion and ethno-geographical origin. He contrasted a 'psyche of the desert' found among Semites—'the desert is monotheistic'—with a 'psyche of the forest,' characteristic of Indo-Europeans whose polytheism appears to be

modelled on a changing nature and a diversity of seasons. He observed that the intolerance of Semitic people is an inevitable consequence of their monotheism. Indo-European peoples, before their conversion to Semitic ideas, never regarded their religion as absolute truth. This is why there is found among these peoples 'a freedom of thought, a spirit of critical inquiry, and individual research.'

Post by "Elli" of March 27, 2019 at 4:32 PM



Post by "Cassius" of March 27, 2019 at 6:37 PM

This thread may give us one of our first opportunities to deal with strong differences of opinion on important details while still focusing on the core aspects of profiting from Epicurean philosophy, and also helping to reignite interest in Epicurus via broad areas in which we can agree.

One of the hallmarks of the ancient Epicureans appears to have been frankness of speech, so I will be frank and observe that my own personal experience and observation is much in line with Daniel's perspective. I consider Abrahamic religion in all its variations to be poison which pollutes thought and discussion and makes it impossible for fundamental Epicurean perspectives to grow. I would cite Lucian's "Alexander The Oracle Monger" and his comments in "Peregrine" about Christians for support of that, but obviously the topic is immense.

However rather than completely agree with this "Rationality cannot be integrated with faith; nor reason with anti-reason; nor, in philosophy, fact with fantasy" I would be a little more cautious. Clearly Epicurus was strongly against the excesses of Platonic dialectical logic, and yet he said also that the wise man governs his life by reason. I'm not sure anyone is explicitly "anti-reason" in the modern world, but I agree that Abrahamic religion teaches exactly that (anti-reason on the most fundamental issues of life). And I am no fan of fantasy, but the limits and uses of speculation can get complex.

So to repeat my personal experience and viewpoint is very close to what Daniel is suggesting. But to simply say "I agree with X" doesn't advance the ball. I think all of us would agree that the world is in a terrible mess due to poor thinking on these issues, and I don't hear or see anyone

in the modern world suggesting a way out of the problem. That's where I think Epicurus and Epicurean philosophy comes in, but we need to start at a deeper level and establish the issues on which we can agree before we jump too fast into those areas where we disagree. And I think that I sense that I agree with Oscar, that it is very important not to overgeneralize. In my personal life most of the people who are closest and most important to me are Christian. I abhor their religion, and yet I understand how they got to where they are, and I know it's not possible to address the problems overnight - and in many cases it's impossible to address them.

So where I'd like to think that we can contribute to the bigger problem, while at the same time profiting ourselves, is to start deeper and work on seeing where we agree and disagree on Epicurus' fundamental views on religion and the nature of the universe.

And at that level, there ARE NO SUPERNATURAL GODS, and anyone or any institution which promotes otherwise is ultimately going to be the enemy of Epicurean philosophy and Epicureans - whether we consider them to be OUR enemy, or not.

Post by "Cassius" of March 27, 2019 at 9:19 PM

Thank you for the detailed reply, Oscar.

Largely I'll just repeat my view from earlier, that I think in an atomistic universe where different people have different experiences, and where there is no absolute justice, then it is important that we - as you indicated earlier - not overgeneralize.

One of the important lessons I think from Epicurus is that your experiences and observations and feelings are valid for you, which the experiences and observations and feelings of others are valid for them.

In your experience you have had primarily pleasant dealings with your Islamic neighbor. Other people in other situations are known to exist who cannot or will not say the same. Your conclusions have worked out for you, and likewise others who take a different view will say that their conclusions are valid for them.

It would not only not solve anything to compare the different sets of experiences and argue that one is superior, but I would go further and say that it would not be sound Epicurean philosophy. Raising one set of experiences in a matter such as this and abstracting it so as to say that one position or the other should be universal, would I think contradict the Epicurean worldview. Only if there were Fate or a Supernatural god would we be able to say that one set of preferences is "wrong" and another is right.

As I struggle to interpret and apply Epicurean principles such as the last ten [Principal Doctrines](#), each of which is based on an understanding that there is no absolute justice, I don't think the direction it points could lead in any other direction.

Post by “Cassius” of March 27, 2019 at 10:18 PM

[Quote from Oscar](#)

But I won't generalize and dehumanize and monstrositize people. I won't. We know where that ends, Epicureans should know better. We are all individuals at the end of the day.

Oscar that sentence strikes me as an interesting one to discuss philosophically. What part of the philosophy would you point to in support of "Epicureans should know better" than to generalize about people? "Dehumanizing" and "monstrosizing" are extremes, but are not many generalizations perfectly appropriate, even (or especially) about the ramifications of religion?

How do you think an Epicurean would approach the question of deciding when to generalize about people, and what types of generalizations are valid and not valid?

Post by “Cassius” of March 27, 2019 at 10:40 PM

In this part of the discussion I think this passage from book three about the nature of men is relevant, in which generalizations are made about the natures of animals and of men. Now while we would not today talk in terms of the same forces leading to these generalizations, Lucretius/Epicurus seem very comfortable with generalizing, while at the same time saying that reason can still allow us to living lives worthy of the gods despite these generalizations being true. This is the [Bailey translation](#)

*Moreover the mind possesses that heat, which it dons when it boils with rage, and the fire flashes more keenly from the eyes. Much cold breath too it has, which goes along with fear, and starts a shuddering in the limbs and stirs the whole frame. And it has too that condition of air lulled to rest, which comes to pass when the breast is calm and the face unruffled. But those creatures have more of heat, whose fiery heart and passionate mind easily boils up in anger. Foremost **in this class** is the fierce force of lions, who often as they groan break their hearts*

with roaring, and cannot contain in their breast the billows of their wrath. But the cold heart of deer is more full of wind, and more quickly it rouses the chilly breath in its flesh, which makes a shuddering motion start in the limbs. But the nature of oxen draws its life rather from calm air, nor ever is the smoking torch of anger set to it to rouse it overmuch, drenching it with the shadow of murky mist, nor is it pierced and frozen by the chill shafts of fear: it has its place midway between the two, the deer and the raging lions.

So is it with the race of men. However much training gives some of them an equal culture, yet it leaves those first traces of the nature of the mind of each. **Nor must we think that such maladies can be plucked out by the roots, but that one man will more swiftly fall into bitter anger, another be a little sooner assailed by fear, while a third will take some things more gently than is right. And in many other things it must needs be that the diverse natures of men differ, and the habits that follow thereon;** but I cannot now set forth the secret causes of these, nor discover names for all the shapes of the first atoms, whence arises this variety in things. One thing herein I see that I can affirm, that so small are the traces of these natures left, which reason could not dispel for us, that nothing hinders us from living a life worthy of the gods.

Post by “Elli” of March 28, 2019 at 6:01 AM

Oscar wrote : Can we generalize that human beings wonder about existence, the universe and our place in it? That's how I start my conversations with any person from any religion.

Sorry, but I have the impression that those conversations are done in a laboratory conditions, as well as this laboratory is without windows-glasses to have an idea what happens outside this laboratory. Conversations that are done inside the safety of our home, while we are drinking fine wine and eating appetizers... but when these persons that have examined all these important issues would step outside that laboratory/home they'll realize that the issues that had examined were existing in the world of ideas by Plato who used dialectics or else a mixture of dialectics with the logic of excluded middle by Aristotle that leads our thoughts and actions to dilemmas i.e. you have two options either black or white and there is no third.

Of course, these questions that set by Oscar are a good start for any generalization that show to us - as the epicureans say - the General picture. But let's see the nature of the questions if are along with the study of Nature. Let's see if the issues and all the concepts we had examined, can be applied in the reality of life on the basis of humans' experiences, and not outside the life and the reality of the experiences, because if it would be the latter, we did

conversations that were based on the fantastic and the safety of our home and as Plato did to his Symposia. And when he (Plato) stepped outside the safety of his home/country, and went to the court of the king Dionysus in Syrakouses for applying his philosophical ideas, he was caught as a slave facing a real danger to lost his head, like a little mouse that got trapped in his own trap that was his idealistic ideas.

So, when we discuss for generalizations i.e. for the General Picture, we have to synthesize through history, biology, physics, economy and geography, all the parts to see/realize/understand if they are strong enough i.e. if they have many similarities (that is the analogy of the Canon) with the General picture. But in the first place, we have to clean up our minds from manipulation that is done by ideologies and politics that use, as I said above, the dialectics i.e. idealistic and stable images that are connected with a terminology i.e. using words without meaning i.e. abstract words or as we say in greek "wooden words", as well as the mixture of dialectics with the excluded middle by Aristotle.

So, in the basis of epicurean philosophy and the methodology of the Canon our thought will be without this manipulation that is setting to us limits to our thoughts and actions. The limits of manipulation that also are based on Myths that provoke to us fears.

Epicurean philosophy examines all the issues without setting limits, because its first principles are to overcome all those obstacles that are against to our survival, and thanks to Nature our survival, as it has been proved, it is synonym with the goal of pleasure. Survival without pleasure is not a survival, it's just like that motto "Lathe Viosas", which it is something just to talk about. Everything in the epicurean philosophy has a fixed bond with the pleasure. Lathe Viosas serves the pleasure, and it has the pleasure in its foundation, i.e. inside its core. If you follow the "Lathe Viosas" and you end up compromised and subordinate, then the pleasure is lost and "Lathe Viosas" loses its core and disappears.

Thus, on the basis of our philosophy i.e the Epicurean, we realize that it starts from "apeiria" the general, the undefined (infinity is the indefinite according to Anaximander). Example : Let's examine the issue "on migration", that we confront here in my little country that is Greece (the bridge as I said it somewhere else) as a part of EU, and be focused on the separation what is fantastic and what is real. Let's examine the phenomena and the causes that caused them, lets examine the details of the causes, let's examine what is akin to them (similarities)... without forgetting what is our goal remembering, as I said, that is synonym with our survival. Because if someone would say to me that the survival is not an issue of importance, I suggest to him to be calm hanging himself on the first tree he'll find.

(to be continued)

Post by "Elli" of March 28, 2019 at 6:08 AM

The methodology we use is of the Epicurean Canon :

THE MIGRATION ISSUE (In the prism of the epicurean philosophy), by George Kaplanis, founding member of the Garden in Thessaloniki.

“Because, although as the land is divided, one has a homeland and the other has another one, but our whole world is enclosed in a perimeter, and so we all have a homeland, the whole Earth, and the world is our common home”.

(“καθ’ εκάστην μεν γαρ αποτομήν της γής άλλων άλλη πατρις εστιν κατά δε την όλην περιοχήν τούδε του κόσμου μία πάντων πατρίς έστιν η πάσα γη και εις ο κόσμος οίκος”),

Diogenes of Oenoanda. Excerpt 30, column 2 - The precious stones of philosophy, Yannis Avramidis, Thyrathen Publications.

Philosophy is thought without limits. Ideologies and politics always set their own limits.

A. REPELLING THE BARRIERS

That is, to examine the Migration Issue without ideologies and politics harassing us.

That is, using the thinking method, the values and the ethics of our philosophy.

Not only because you lighten the case from a bunch of trash, but also because the manipulation of “mass” or “mob” - that is, all of us - is now done with the use of mathematical models in an **extremely** scientific way.

And this way includes both ideologies and politics. Thus, a person decides with free will that he will have a specific view on a matter. At the same time, other people also decide - each one individually, always with free will - that they will have the same view on the same matter. These all together are a percentage of the total, which is ultimately the percentage predicted by the manipulation model.

B. BE CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU STEP ON YOUR FIRST PACE

So, in order to be on the right track, you have to escape the manipulation.

And how does one escape from it? With knowledge. (I stole it from modern analysts who know the manipulation models). And this knowledge will lead you to a truth, that is, to reality.

So you get away with knowing in the first place, of what is true and what is lie, or what is real and what is fantastic.

“Only this is your sure and steady hope for the discovery of the truth, and there is no other. Your only hope is to judge and distinguish the lie from the truth... And if by chance you acquire such capability and skill, **then** you proceed to the control of what is being said. Otherwise, you

have to know that nothing will prevent you to be dragged from your nose by anyone..." *

So you start, according to the epicurean philosophy.

C. THE FIELD

It will look strange to you, but right now I'm talking about the migration issue. That is **also** for us. Why the Epicurean method requires that we start from "**apeiria**", the general, the undefined (*infinity is the indefinite* according to Anaximander). And we and the immigrants belong in this general. Immigrants do not just change only their own lives, they change ours too. So we both get into the frame. Diogenes of Oenoanda would mock me here. He has written that "the stranger is not a stranger". I make this separation just do to determine the position they have in the field. **

Of course, very badly, I used the word "frame". Because the frame requires an image, that is, something immobile. The best thing would be to use the word "**field**", a field that can capture and include within it the events as they evolve, the field of action and the field of praxis. So the field will operate in the dimension of time, so we will move into the time, but it can also be expanded into the space, because from "us and them" I said above, if we take "us" and we continuously add other "us", will emerge Greece, France, Germany, Europe and the whole Western world, except for Israel and Japan, for the time being.

But we also have those who emigrate. According to the Foreign Minister, on the Egyptian-Somali axis there are 150 million people under the age of twenty-five who live **without prospect**. He was talking about the near future and the risks of the area's destabilization because of the islamists. Other date, like the ones we discussed online, report more than five billion people living below the poverty line. And they are candidates for immigration in the next decades.

In this point that they always tell me that I am a racist. Then, of course, I always complain to the UN. Because it never calls me to ask what I am and what I am not, to form the numbers accordingly. Of course, if changing my thoughts will make 2-3 billion people to become economically settled, then "*eateon*" bid it farewell according to Epicurus, that is to say that I could even become a Buddhist monk.

Quite simply, Epicurean philosophy asks us to count on phenomena, events, reality. And not in empty beliefs, that is, in words of air.

(to be continued)

Post by "Elli" of March 28, 2019 at 6:12 AM

D. US

This “us” sounds selfish, but it is natural. Personally, on this subject I would not take away something from my personal life to offer it to the migrant issue. Unless this is something superfluous. If I had an excess of potential, as Nietzsche also says. I would definitely offer to my family, my friends, my homeland and of course a weak person who would be in great need. But this alone is a whole debate, and it would be nice for anyone wishing to discuss it to make a suggestion to investigate it.

So let us include to “us” the societies that immigration is directed to. That is to say the agglomerations that human creates in order to be able to meet his necessary and natural desires originating from the instinct of survival and security. As many other animals do. Of course, as soon as people create an agglomeration, they immediately attack their neighbor, but this is another story. Now if agglomeration involves an anarchist society, the muslim society or a nation, that does not matter. I will call it society as of now, because it is simpler.

Compulsory element of society is **cohesion**. Without it, it dissolves. We have said that when we talked about the Epicurean philosophy that we likened to a coherent system. The society that has little cohesion is an unstable system. It’s like a bottle that you put it standing upright with the spout facing down. It falls with the slightest shake. It’s like the marriage that breaks because the husband forgot to go to the grocery. A society will also pass financial crisis and unemployment and disasters and wars and foreign occupation. What will give it the strength to overcome it all over time so it can continue to protect her members is cohesion. The means to enhance cohesion are usually religion, origin, culture, customs, etc., but all of this is well known.

I do not say randomly all of the above, I follow the methodology that Epicurus teaches us to follow dealing with “*the theory of principles*”, of course from the Letter to Pythocles. That is to go deep and look at the first principles, which here is the natural law of survival. At the same time, however, we must not forget that Epicurean philosophy is hostile to anything that reduces our resistance for survival.

So, my own conclusion so far is that we will help, as far as we can, without harming our society, that is to say ourselves. That is, without committing suicide.

E. THESE

We said that people who need help are billions. Including Greeks. Let us observe phenomena without fixations, without dramas and without crying. These people move and will move to meet their necessary and natural desires.

So we can answer the question of Epicurean philosophy: **To what unshakable laws the power on everything is based, (* 3)**. The driving force of continuous migration is the coverage of the necessary and natural desires. So it will not stop as long as there are causes

that create this potential.

Now you will tell me that we know this, and we do not need a whole Epicurean methodology to find them. Be careful: These belong to the first principles and therefore the Epicurean method of thinking forces us to set them **on the basis of our thinking**.

F. THE INTERMEDIATES - THE ROUTE

But there is the ideological-political flow that calls for the borders to be left open, for those who want to come and for us to take care of their food, shelter, medical care and work. I don't have any ideological or political objection to these. I don't have any ideological - political confrontation with them. I just ask them **to set to the foundations of their thinking** these, the first principles, the unwavering laws on which the potential of migration is based. And of course their direct effect, **that migration will not stop**. I understand they will not. Because many years now I make the question: **Do you know that migration will not stop? Do you accept this even as a possibility?** And all these years I get the same answer: You are a racist. I am almost convinced that racists are some people who constantly reflect on methodological issues.

Why do not they deal with the question?

According to the Epicurean method of thought, everything is explained "*steadfastly*", that is, without being shaken - stable, if they are based on multiple causes. It is the "*manifold way*", which is referred to the Epicurus' Epistle to Herodotus, and has been analyzed by our friend Demetris Altas in one of his propositions. And of course, easily, "*simply*", the individual are explained, if we first investigate the general and undefined and look into the first principles. (This is from the Letter to Pythoklis). And in order to achieve this, we must stand firm on the purpose- "*for which we reason out these*", also from the Letter to Pythoklis.

And what is the goal: Reduce human pain until extinction. This is from the Letter to Meneoceus. And the pain starts from the immigrant's home, before he starts.

I will mention some causes. I recall the question: Why it is not considered as a possibility that migration will not stop?

(to be continued)

Post by "Elli" of March 28, 2019 at 6:14 AM

1) The "Transfer" and the "Solidary».

Once, the slaves **did not** go to their bosses' country alone, as they do today, but they were transferred by the bosses themselves. They had free transfer. Of course, the business required great funding, because it needed a fleet for transport, a private army, etc. We are talking about the 19th century in the US. What we call Hot Spot today, then it was called Slave Market. It was like the Super Market, but it did not sell spaghetti and such, it sold people. Founder of such a market was George Peabody, who deployed it with his company called Georgetown Slave Market. Banker Rothschild, in the position of a spokesman for his interests in London, appointed his servant George Soros... sorry, I meant George Peabody. Today, there is the Open Society Slave Super Market, run by Soros or Peabody... I don't remember, however, his first name is George and he is an employee. This institution pays its employees to its branches called NGOs, who take care of the merchandise's maintenance.

And all this of course must be supported by some ideology, for manipulation reasons, as we said. This ideology is **obviously offhand made** and it is based on the logical sensationalism that first defines the concept of antiracism and on this basis constructs the concept of racism. The field of thought that this ideology permits, starts locally from our borders with "get in" and ends to our borders with "get out". Chronically it deals with today.

That's why they are not in a position to think about whether other immigrants will continue to come in the future. That's why when you tell them that the immigrant's pain starts from his home, their feelings get frozen, the matter does not interest them. Because that pain is beyond their local authority. And when they shake their hand on the opposite shore and tell them to come, and the others drown, they feel no remorse.

Finally, I would like to note that the parallelism of Sorros and Peabody is based on the "*things akin*" also from the letter to Pythoklis.

2) Another cause is very simple: They don't answer the question, why they don't get paid for that.

3) Another cause is idealism.

A devotee of the above ideological flow has become addicted to the sense of immobility. He focuses on a wretched immigrant's photograph, and considers that this is the whole reality. If I help him, then all right. It is enough to find the concept, a stable, immobile, eternal and unalterable idea that will solve the issue. And here it was found: "solidarity". Therefore, the "solidary". Then they leave the ideal world, they come to the sensible world and say to you: Since there is the concept of solidarity that solves the problems, why do you ask? You just want to create obstacles because you are a racist.

Surely some people will consider as excessive that I refer to modern slavery. I suggest using the phenomena as Epicurus wants.

There was and maybe there is an import model of foreign fishermen to the fishing boats of Michaniona. For example, we asked for 300 fishermen, and through the Egyptian Consulate 300 Egyptians came, who were working under a contract.

This, of course, is a practice that applies in many countries for a long time. This practice maintains a balance, because it also benefits the people who pay salaries and the people who receive the salary. With open borders, this balance is lost due to the law of labor offer and demand. So the person who pays salary benefits and hurts the person who gets paid for his work, who is harmed in many ways. According to the values of our philosophy, this is unacceptable. Our philosophy forbids us damaging and getting damaged. It is now known that in Europe there are companies that hire workers hourly. **People of pain are constantly growing in our societies.**

In other words, while controlled immigration can improve both our lives and their life, and reduces pain, uncontrolled one creates this modern form of slavery for all of us.

(to be continued)

Post by “Elli” of March 28, 2019 at 6:15 AM

G. THE ISSUE OF MUSLIMS

That is, the issue that they call me Islamophobic.

The matter is enormous. It would need a separate proposition. I will confine myself to the “beginnings” in general:

There is a core in there. This core constantly produces a question: If the Koran is the truth, **why do we need the others?** Every time they decide and act accordingly. In Spain, then, which was theirs, they had developed a great literature and culture. Until they decided that the Koran was right and burned their libraries and books.

This question is repeated every now and then, and we will have to wait to see how they will answer, these or their children, or their grandchildren, or the great-grandchildren etc. to see if we are going to get caught up in this nonsense, we or our children, or our grandchildren, etc.

But this nonsense eventually emerged.

Protagonists of this tragic farce, is a muslim heresy, the Wahhabists (if I write it correctly).

This heresy has been around for almost three centuries. They have no priests, because they do not accept the interpretation of the Koran, they believe in it and apply it verbatim - that is, literally, they consider Sunnis as heretics, the Shiites as infidels, they destroy and disappear anything different. For example, in Saudi Arabia, where they dominate, there is no longer a building older than 500 years. They demolished even the mosques. The Buddha figures that were carved in the Mountain in Afghanistan were not destroyed by the Taliban, but by them.

It's not like Al-Qaida, which was applying "you hit me - I hit you", they only apply "I hit you". They have declared the "djih d", that is the sacred war, to defend "the supreme interest of human", which is of course "the true faith". So the struggle to conquer the infidels' countries is a struggle for the prevailing of the Sacred Law. These are not idealists!

It is, however, for laughter and crying. Here applies what someone said, that history is repeated only as a farce. The Turks had begun the same "djih d" in the very same area to give battle to Manzikert in 1071 and to reach the Aegean immediately afterwards. **In this way, the Turks conquered the primary position into the muslim society.** And the map of the new caliphate includes all the lands of the Ottoman Empire and even further to the borders of their hearts.

In Europe the signs were obvious for years. Of course, the Europeans did not understand anything. They implement the strategy of Lernaen Hydra. For every idiot of theirs who kills and being killed, must happen a fermentation and other, new ones of their jump out. That's why, after the strike in Nice, the appearances with burqas and such multiplied in this area. That is why the French Authorities reacted immediately. To burn the point they cut. The aim of their strategy is to accumulate hatred from the Westerns against the Muslims, to enhance hatred and end up in conflicts, etc. They become giants through blood. The funny thing is that in another such crime earlier, a French scientist psychologist appeared on television and said that the slaughterer Jihadist did it because of the unemployment in his neighborhood. I did not stand it, I ended up looking for tranquillizers.

As you have understood, all of this is about relaxing the society's cohesion in order to turn into an unstable system. Like that bottle we said before, standing upright with the spout down.

H. CASES OF INTERVENTION

The solutions that are being heard today are basically: 1) Open the border and whoever wants can pass through, and 2) Stand at the border with a machine gun and do not let anyone pass. From a strategic point of view, both are naive, to speak politely. They are not even strategic, they are tactical without strategy. You have to be very looser to think so. With the blinkers of ideology they can't see in time and space, and therefore can't evaluate the potential that, anyway, will bring the problem inside the borders in many ways.

As for my own views, I will bring three examples:

1) Once, in order for China to export products, it had to fall under the international trade treaties. It was blocked by United States. They sign a contract between each other (less than a page) that says: United States' financial capital does whatever it wants in China and in return China enters international trade. China applies dumping (subsidizes its products) and sells half-price. It attacks India and Pakistan. India endures, but Pakistan's industry is being destroyed. Waves of Pakistani immigrants are being created. The financial capital gives money to the ideology of "solidarity" to take care of them and "integrate" them. For humanitarian reasons, of course.

Who is the enemy? The Pakistani immigrant? China? The financial capital? Other; I don't know - I don't answer? If you find it, you also locate the goal. And only then you look for the solution. If you don't find it, go for a coffee.

Because there is no strategy without goal. And without strategy you are always defeated.

2) Norway has some oil. They live like kings because of this income.

3) Algeria is the world's third-largest producer of natural gas. Exports immigrants. New Guinea produces more oil than Norway. 70% of its population live below the poverty line.

What needs to be done: First of all, in the mental field, we must understand that we should intervene because it will be useful for our societies, that they should not be dissolved. That is, from all the scenarios, let's investigate the "probable", that is the most probable - this is from Letter to Herodotus - that is: either we will intervene or dissolve. That is, to understand the benefit. Because there is a huge problem for a human to understand what benefits him (Hermarchus, Philodemos, Diogenes of Oenoanda). The intervention should be political, economic, cultural, the possible combinations among them or anything else. However, all these will be the means to attain the goal, and not an end in itself. The intervention should be done where the pain is born.

The respect for the human personality that Epicurean philosophy teaches, does not allow us to leave these people helpless.

* *"Και μόνη σοι αύτη πιστή και βέβαιος ελπής επί την αλήθειάν τε και εύρεσιν αυτής, άλλη δε ουδ ητισούν ή το κρίνειν δύνασθαι και χωρίζειν από των αληθών τα ψευδήΚαι εί ποτε τοιαύτην τινά δύναμιν και τέχνην πορισάμενος ήεις επί την εξέτασιν των λεγομένων. εί δέ μη, εύ ίσθι ως ουδέν κωλύσει σε της ρινός έλκεσθαι υφ' εκάστων"*. Lucian "About Heresies", 810, "Epicurus, Texts, Sources of the Epicurean Philosophy and Art of Living", G. Avramidis, THYRATHEN Publications.

** Side by side. (benefactors and beneficiaries are not next to each other, not even Islamists with Christians and others).

Post by "Cassius" of March 28, 2019 at 6:41 AM

Aside: I am not sure that "Welcome Daniel" is an adequate reflection of the subject matter anymore. 😊 At some point I'll find a way to split off the thread to a new heading.

Post by "Cassius" of March 28, 2019 at 6:55 AM

Another thing I want to do to is to pull together the cites from the surviving texts that would most closely bear on this topic, which is really not "Islam" as much as it is something more general - such as discussion of the benefits and hazards of the identity of cultures and nations, or something like that.

Here is a preliminary list that immediately occurs to me:

[Epicurus PD10](#): (As to the invalidity of considering something monstrous if it allows the person involved to successfully live pleasurably) "10. If the things that produce the pleasures of profligate men really freed them from fears of the mind concerning celestial and atmospheric phenomena, the fear of death, and the fear of pain; if, further, they taught them to limit their desires, we should never have any fault to find with such persons, for they would then be filled with pleasures from every source and would never have pain of body or mind, which is what is bad."

[Diogenes Laertius](#): (as to some men being our enemies) "Epicurus used to call ... the Cynics the 'enemies of Greece'"

[Diogenes of Oinoanda](#): (as to making generalizations about cultural groups) :

"A clear indication of the complete inability of the gods to prevent wrong-doings is provided by the nations of the Jews and Egyptians, who, as well as being the most superstitious of all peoples, are the vilest of all peoples."

[Diogenes of Oinoanda](#): (as to considering false religion to be a disease coexisting with the idea of love of humanity) "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."

[Epicurus Letter to Menoeceus](#): (As to the best life being spent among like-minded friends) "Exercise yourself in these and related precepts day and night, both by yourself and with one who is like-minded; then never, either in waking or in dream, will you be disturbed, but will live as a god among men. For man loses all semblance of mortality by living in the midst of immortal blessings."

[Epicurus Doctrines on Justice](#) (following [PD10](#) that there is no absolute standard of right and wrong other than the pleasurable living of the people involved, so that when there is no agreement, there is no concept of justice):

32. Those animals which are incapable of making binding agreements with one another not to inflict nor suffer harm are without either justice or injustice; and likewise for those peoples who either could not or would not form binding agreements not to inflict nor suffer harm.

33. There never was such a thing as absolute justice, but only agreements made in mutual dealings among men in whatever places at various times providing against the infliction or suffering of harm.

34. Injustice is not an evil in itself, but only in consequence of the fear which is associated with the apprehension of being discovered by those appointed to punish such actions.

36. In general justice is the same for all, for it is something found mutually beneficial in men's dealings, but in its application to particular places or other circumstances the same thing is not necessarily just for everyone.

37. Among the things held to be just by law, whatever is proved to be of advantage in men's dealings has the stamp of justice, whether or not it be the same for all; but if a man makes a law and it does not prove to be mutually advantageous, then this is no longer just. And if what is mutually advantageous varies and only for a time corresponds to our concept of justice, nevertheless for that time it is just for those who do not trouble themselves about empty words, but look simply at the facts.

38. Where without any change in circumstances the things held to be just by law are seen not to correspond with the concept of justice in actual practice, such laws are not really just; but wherever the laws have ceased to be advantageous because of a change in circumstances, in that case the laws were for that time just when they were advantageous for the mutual dealings of the citizens, and subsequently ceased to be just when they were no longer advantageous.

(As to excluding from our lives people who cannot coexist with us):

39. The man who best knows how to meet external threats makes into one family all the creatures he can; and those he can not, he at any rate does not treat as aliens; and where he

finds even this impossible, he avoids all dealings, and, so far as is advantageous, excludes them from his life.

(As to the desirability of being able to defend ourselves by force from threats against us, and living among people who share our values)

40. Those who possess the power to defend themselves against threats by their neighbors, being thus in possession of the surest guarantee of security, live the most pleasant life with one another; and their enjoyment of the fullest intimacy is such that if one of them dies prematurely, the others do not lament his death as though it called for pity.

Epicurus Letter to Menoeceus: (As to the best life as one being spent among -like-minded friends): "Exercise yourself in these and related precepts day and night, both by yourself and **with one who is like-minded**; then never, either in waking or in dream, will you be disturbed, but will live as a god among men. For man loses all semblance of mortality by living in the midst of immortal blessings."

[Torquatus / Cicero](#): (As to some men being non-reformable and thus requiring restraint by force: "Yet nevertheless some men indulge without limit their avarice, ambition and love of power, lust, gluttony and those other desires, which ill-gotten gains can never diminish but rather must inflame the more; inasmuch that they appear proper subjects for restraint rather than for reformation."

[Torquatus / Cicero](#): (As to the "safety of our fellow citizens" and defending our country in time of war can be essential to our own wellbeing) "Can you then suppose that those heroic men performed their famous deeds without any motive at all? What their motive was, I will consider later on: for the present I will confidently assert, that if they had a motive for those undoubtedly glorious exploits, that motive was not a love of virtue in and for itself.—He wrested the necklet from his foe.—Yes, and saved himself from death. But he braved great danger.—Yes, before the eyes of an army.—What did he get by it?—Honor and esteem, the strongest guarantees of security in life.—He sentenced his own son to death.—If from no motive, I am sorry to be the descendant of anyone so savage and inhuman; but if his purpose was by inflicting pain upon himself to establish his authority as a commander, and to tighten the reins of discipline during a very serious war by holding over his army the fear of punishment, then his action aimed at ensuring the safety of his fellow citizens, upon which he knew his own depended."

[Lucian - "Aristotle the Oracle-Monger"](#) (as to Epicureans confronting false religion) - ""The prosperity of the oracle is perhaps not so wonderful, when one learns what sensible, intelligent questions were in fashion with its votaries. Well, it was war to the knife between him and Epicurus, and no wonder. What fitter enemy for a charlatan who patronized miracles and hated truth, than the thinker who had grasped the nature of things and was in solitary possession of that truth? As for the Platonists, Stoics, Pythagoreans, they were his good friends; he had no quarrel with them. But the unmitigated Epicurus, as he used to call him, could not but be hateful to him, treating all such pretensions as absurd and puerile."

[Lucian - "The Death of Peregrine"](#) (as to Epicurean criticism of Christianity) - "It was now that he came across the priests and scribes of the 11 Christians, in Palestine, and picked up their queer creed. I can tell you, he pretty soon convinced them of his superiority; prophet, elder, ruler of the Synagogue--he was everything at once; expounded their books, commented on them, wrote books himself. They took him for a God, accepted his laws, and declared him their president. The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day,--the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. Well, the end of it was that Proteus was arrested and thrown into prison. This was the very thing to lend an air to his favourite arts of clap-trap and wonder-working; he was now a made man. The Christians took it all very seriously: he was no sooner in prison, than they began trying every means to get him out again,--but without success. Everything else that could be done for him they most devoutly did. They thought of nothing else. Orphans and ancient widows might be seen hanging about the prison from break of day. Their officials bribed the gaolers to let them sleep inside with him. Elegant dinners were conveyed in; their sacred writings were read; and our old friend Peregrine (as he was still called in those days) became for them "the modern Socrates." In some of the Asiatic 13 cities, too, the Christian communities put themselves to the expense of sending deputations, with offers of sympathy, assistance, and legal advice. The activity of these people, in dealing with any matter that affects their community, is something extraordinary; they spare no trouble, no expense. Peregrine, all this time, was making quite an income on the strength of his bondage; money came pouring in. You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on trust, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property. Now an adroit, unscrupulous fellow, who has seen the world, has only to get among these simple souls, and his fortune is pretty soon made; he plays with them."

Post by "Elli" of March 28, 2019 at 7:29 AM

"and, besides, love of humanity prompts us to aid also the foreigners who come here."

We presuppose, of course, that when Diogenes of Oinoanda wrote that he did not know where the stones of his wall will be gone and lost, and how they will be found again.

Yes, that is true, Diogenes of Oinoanda did a good job, but in now days he would probably say : in the basis of my love of humanity, I gave a fortune of money to build this huge wall with stones that were beneficial to the locals or to the foreigners who came, just for the purpose to

build their homes or to build sheepfold for placing inside them their sheep and goats. Humans and sheep and goats all united as one for living inside homes and sheepfolds ...chewing the "grass of ignorance and nonsense" without examine and the issue that there is also a butcher that one day will visit them all. 🤔

Post by “Daniel” of March 28, 2019 at 11:08 AM

Today there are two prevalent ways of studying moral values. One posits that these can be rationally verified and established: values will be universally valid, and once errors are cleared away it will be a matter merely of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and evil. The alternative way considers that since all values are relative and therefore equivalent, nothing sensible or interesting may be said about them.

There is, however, a third approach. This is genealogical and shows the human, social, philosophical, and religious breeding ground of a certain doctrine: inquires as to the origin of certain ideas; of which type of man they are expression; what it is they reflect—and to where they lead. Any world view is inescapably linked to a particular outlook on man, the world, and history; and, in its turn, it depends on the mental constitution—itsself anchored at a biological level—of the particular people by whom it was created.

This third approach, I claim, is more congruent with Epicurean epistemology, based on the very best evidence one can find, even while admitting that this evidence may be limited and incomplete and subject to revision.

And, of course, it inevitably involves generalizations. Generalization allows humans and animals to recognize the similarities in knowledge acquired in one circumstance, allowing for transfer of knowledge onto new situations. Anecdotal evidence, that is, evidence collected in a casual or informal manner and relying heavily or entirely on personal testimony (“I have a friend who is X”) has very limited value.

So, coming back to our original point of disputation, pray tell me, Oscar, 1/in which Islamic society you think you would gladly live as an Epicurean; and 2/why you have not moved there yet.

By the way, someone who used to idealize the Islamic world over the Judeo-Christian one was Uncle Adolf and it didn't work out so well for anybody. I can also use the Reductio ad Hitlerum, you see 😊

I'm not partial to any of the Abrahamic cults. “The Darkening Age” by Catherine Nixey is a good place to start if one wants to understand what a clash of civilizations the encounter of Athens

and Jerusalem ignited.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Darkening_Age

And I don't need to remind you what happened to Spinoza when he started reading Epicurean philosophy...

Judeo-Christianity, the West, has spent the last 500 years trying to become Epicurean or 'modern' (remember "The Swerve"?). Islam has not, and that is the difference.

Post by "Elli" of March 28, 2019 at 11:55 AM

Sorry, I forgot to say : [Daniel](#) , WELCOME, and I am so glad you are here with us ! 😊

Post by "Cassius" of March 28, 2019 at 1:48 PM

Oscar as we exchanged in private messages, I will set up a new thread and move all or part of this one to something more descriptive. However I think we all would be well served to remember that we are skirting the kind of modern politics that is so divisive and disruptive as to produce much more pain than pleasure, and much more disruption than assistance if our common purpose is the advancement of Epicurean philosophy.

If we are going to be able to stay within the confines of our common purposes, we're going to need to be very careful about how we proceed from here. Obviously the ancient texts from Epicurean sources are fully in play, and it ought to be possible to discuss how these issues should be approached without name-calling on any side, or unnecessary specific references to modern politics.

I realize that it will be difficult to achieve this however, so we'll likely have to accept that some topics are just not consistent with the purpose of this forum.

Post by "Cassius" of March 28, 2019 at 2:18 PM

Another Admin note -- I just pasted post 27 into this thread, which makes it slightly out of context from the flow above it. Please keep that in mind and do not consider it an immediate response to the post above it.

I will do my best to moderate this thread consistently with the purpose of the forum for the overall promotion of Epicurean philosophy. While I often share the feeling included within the Emma Goldman quote above, one man's bigotry is another man's highest virtue, and it cannot be the purpose of this forum to have full-scale conflict between which of opposing sides of any specific cultural conflict is "correct." It is in fact my view that given PDs 30-40 it is very difficult to see how an Epicurean argument can be advanced in "proof" that any single perspective on an ethical issue is in fact "correct." There are only the people involved, and their varying views of what is pleasant in life, and their decision as to what will make them happiest within their limited lifespans. As Epicurus stated, and as probably ought to be the heart of this discussion, "there was never such a thing as absolute justice...."

Post by "Daniel" of March 28, 2019 at 4:45 PM

Oscar, I see lots of strawmanning and moralizing in your comments, and you still haven't answered my question:

-In which Islamic society do you think an Epicurean could gladly live?

Post by "Cassius" of March 28, 2019 at 4:59 PM

It's my job to try to keep everyone civil. One possible more neutral way to consider that question might be:

1 - I can't imagine a devoted Epicurean gladly choosing to live in a hyper-supernatural religious society or any kind, unless he/she was truly deprived of better options. In which case, choosing to live in Mecca might be preferable to being dead (maybe / probably / possibly?). Anyone disagree?

2 - If it were possible to have a "secular-islamic" society, along the lines of our modern non-fundamental Sunday-only Christians, would a dedicated Epicurean still have major objections to living within such a society, and if so, why?

Post by “Elli” of March 28, 2019 at 6:36 PM

Again : description of the Canon or About Criterion and Principle.