

Did Epicurus Commit Suicide Due To His Disease? (Merger of Two Threads On When Voluntary Death Makes Sense)

Post by "Don" of December 8, 2022 at 8:38 AM

[Quote from Cassius via Epicurus Wiki](#)

The fourth tenet of the Four-Part Cure alludes precisely to this: what is painful, is easy to endure. In illness, we hope to regain our health; even when the illness is chronic and painful, the pain grows dull with habituation, and we learn to cherish the pleasures left us, despite the pain; finally, when pain reaches an unbearable maximum, death cannot be far behind it -- and death means the cessation of the senses, and thus of both pleasure and pain.

Epicurus' view on suicide is both humane and practical: it does not entirely disallow suicide (as does Christianity, and other religious faiths), nor does it offer it too readily, either as escapism or as an article in some code of honor (as have done several militarist cultures).

In principle, I think I agree with that last paragraph, but, for me, it would be an extrapolation from the existing texts and not based on any I've read (in this thread or outside of it). Especially in the letter to Menoikeus, Epicurus seems to come down hard on those who talk about exiting life as quickly as possible. He doesn't appear to add any qualifiers. The end of life situations I read are about living life in a manner that will allow you to accept imminent death at the end, even if accompanied by "pains that cannot be augmented," with no regrets, no cursing the gods, no fear of an afterlife, etc.