

Sunday November 9, 2025 - Zoom Discussion 12:30 PM EST - Epicurus on Good And Evil

Post by “DaveT” of November 12, 2025 at 11:36 AM

[Cassius](#) I appreciate your effort to provide citations that you hope will clarify my understanding of the doctrines. But on this topic of pain/pleasure in the Tetracharmakon, they are not persuasive. Since I've survived more than 3/4 of a century, my past experiences tell me that generalized doctrines expressed in the language of absolutes don't always hold up as universal truths.

I know personally, and have seen innumerable times that the following assertion is not true. "4) pain when lasting is usually slight," it is not usually slight. Sometimes it is, but not usually.

And further, the quote that [pain] "when oppressive is of short duration, so that its temporariness reconciles us to its intensity,..." Again, sometimes, but as a premise to further doctrinal beliefs, it can't believably be stated as a universal truth.

And, I have to say that the earlier quote that when pain is oppressive: "4) he does not hesitate to depart from life, if that would better his condition." Really? Being dead betters one's condition? Sure, it stops the pain, but you're dead!

I don't object to a person making a rational, competent decision to end their life, even absent pain or suffering. However, those quoted thoughts, as a proof that there is a good alternative for one pursuing happiness if their severe pain lasts beyond a short time and it is "oppressive", seems to me to be a superficial and dismissive attitude by those speakers. This, I think, is especially so to someone who tries to bear chronic pain, or to cope with ongoing knowledge that their unstoppable progressive disease is making them less and less able to live like they used to live, someone who tries to find some modicum of daily joy, but doesn't want to call it quits. That suffering person, seems to me to be far more common than someone who is willing to take the needle and end it all. So, Epicureans must speak to this person, too, rather than offering them the choice to commit suicide if you are struggling to find pleasure.

Does this appear to be disdainful of the entire tetracharmikos? Perhaps to some, but not to me.