

Inflicting Pain

Post by "Cassius" of January 23, 2018 at 4:01 PM

It's always complex to debate specifics, and the Japan example is no exception. Was it needed? Was it appropriate? My answer on those questions has varied over the years, but it is difficult to dispute that it did bring the Japanese warmaking regime to an end more quickly than otherwise. Not taking a position on whether that was the right thing to do under the specific case, though. Probably easier is just the hypothetical normal homeowner being invaded with intent to murder by a random burglar, with the homeowner shooting the burglar or otherwise simply inflicting pain in order to protect his / her young children. I think most would agree that in virtually all such situations the infliction of pain was "correct."

Even those situations can be analyzed further, but what Epicurus was really saying I think is that there's no absolute standard by which we can look at a situation from outside and make an absolute judgment of right or wrong. The burglar apparently thought it would enhance his pleasure to invade the home. The homeowner thought it would advance his pleasure to stop him. Each side is making choices based on their view of their best interest, and both sides have to live with the consequences.

Even looking back at Japan vs USA, same analysis. Japan's leaders saw their interest one way, the USA's leaders saw it differently. One side one, and the other lost, but neither can legitimately claim that God or ideal virtue justified their side, because those things simply don't exist.