

PD04 - Chronic Illness (Pain) - Migraines and PD 4

Post by "Charles" of January 18, 2021 at 9:07 PM

Quote from The Principle Doctrines & The Inscription

"Pain does not last continuously in the flesh, but the acutest pain is there for a very short time, and even that which just exceeds the pleasure in the flesh does not continue for many days at once. But chronic illnesses permit a predominance of pleasure over pain in the flesh." - PD 4

"The extremes pains cannot last long: either they quickly take life and are themselves also taken away with it, or they acuteness is diminished." - Epicurean Maxims, Fr. 107
Diogenes O. Epicurean Inscription

The meaning of this Principle Doctrine is clear enough yet some might struggle to reconcile the end of the first sentence, in that debilitating diseases can very often cause pain to someone for years. Furthermore, I'd imagine that finding such clear examples of this to be rare, especially considering the small number of Epicureans or hedonists out there to share this outlook.

However, in my case, something that I've certainly brought up before elsewhere such as the podcast or on these forums, are the chronic migraines I deal with, and have dealt with for almost as long as I can remember. Calling them a disease may be a stretch to some extent and over the years I've been appointed to a few personal physicians and discussed with various peoples who have a medical background - to no avail on "curing" them beyond extreme solutions.

They have been, since my early teenage years, become manageable due to my increased understanding surrounding them and through keeping a few pill bottles of migraine relief on hand. It wasn't until around I was late 17 to early 18 that I became more "hedonist-centric", understanding the benefits of pleasure that so greatly complimented my atheism and materialism. In turn my attitude towards these often sudden, extremely painful moments had shifted significantly.

No longer did I worry or fear over them to such an extent that I avoided my one known trigger like the plague, and no longer had I thought of it as something that would ruin or put whatever activity I was enjoying in peril. They became a brief lapse of pain between my pleasures, something to be driven out and overcome, the bodily equivalent of casting ones inner demons out one could say.

This mindset has not changed upon becoming Epicurean, and this personal example has

resonated this specific Principle Doctrine within me the moment I first read them online, and would be further reinforced when I would later purchase physical books filled with Epicurus' writings (Penguin Classics Ed.) and a small personal booklet containing the Doctrines.

So to conclude: I would finalize my point that, even if my situation is unique to myself, and that the migraines and pain are still present, this quote by Epicurus is absolutely true and sometimes it could take a love of life and pleasure to truly "feel" that.