

Discussion of New Substack Article: "A Gate To Be Burst: Absence of Pain"

Post by "Cassius" of February 12, 2024 at 10:02 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Some new ideas after reading this: "Absence of pain is the highest pleasure" is different than saying something like: "any pleasure without pain is the best kind of pleasure we can experience".

This is another point. I don't think it makes any sense given the rest of Epicurean physics and epistemology to conclude that when Epicurus spoke of "the highest pleasure" he was speaking of a single particular experience such as sex, or eating, or anything else that is a specific activity. Sex with whom? Eating what? Listening to what kind of music? Who other than ourselves is to say that listening to Bach is more pleasant to us than listening to Beethoven?

Epicurus talks about the man at the banquet choosing food that is "the most pleasant" rather than the greatest quantity. I think we can apply that reasoning to the entire subject. When we speak of pleasure we speak of agreeableness, but exactly what kind of agreeableness is going to be personal to the individual living thing that is experiencing it. There are no Platonic ideals in any other aspect of life, and I don't think there is a Platonic ideal of "the highest pleasure" that fits everyone exactly the same way. Pleasure is ultimately a feeling and feelings aren't abstractions that can be stated in a precise mathematical or verbal formula. To employ one of the phrases we posted about recently: All models are 'wrong,' in that they are not the exact equivalent of the reality that they seek to describe, but some models (like "absence of pain") are useful, in that they help us understand how to target a goal.