

An Epicurean Understanding of Pleasure

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Consider how this sounds when taken as a whole:

As soon as the pain produced by the lack of something is removed, pleasure in the flesh is not increased but only embellished. Yet the limit of enjoyment in the mind is produced by reasoning out these very things and similar things, which once provoked the greatest fears in the mind. Infinite time and finite time contain the same amount of joy, if its limits are measured out through reasoning. The flesh assumes that the limits of joy are infinite, and that infinite joy can be produced only through infinite time. But the mind, reasoning out the goal and limits of the flesh and dissolving fears about eternity, produces a complete way of life and therefore has no need of infinite time; yet the mind does not flee from joy, nor when events cause it to exit from life does it look back as if it has missed any aspect of the best life. One who perceives the limits of life knows how easy it is to expel the pain produced by a lack of something and to make one's entire life complete; so that there is no need for the things that are achieved through struggle.