

Confusion: "The feelings are only two"

Post by "Cassius" of May 27, 2025 at 4:52 PM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

For sure. When it comes to pains that are chosen to avoid greater pain or achieve greater pleasure, I completely understand. However, I am more concerned about the pains that we do not choose - the unnecessary pains that serve no purpose. How do we reconcile them under Epicureanism, particularly if they are frequent? If one is truly unable to get rid of such pains, is it best to adjust one's mindset and accept them? Does Epicurus write about this sort of thing? From what I've read so far, pain is mainly mentioned in the contexts of a) pain should be avoided and b) some pains should be chosen in the name of prudence. But what of the pains that can neither be avoided nor are chosen?

We certainly sometimes are subjected to pain beyond our control. As Epicurus said to Menoeceus,

Quote

We must then bear in mind that the future is neither ours, nor yet wholly not ours, so that we may not altogether expect it as sure to come, nor abandon hope of it, as if it will certainly not come.

...

(He thinks that with us lies the chief power in determining events, some of which happen by necessity) and some by chance, and some are within our control; for while necessity cannot be called to account, he sees that chance is inconstant, but that which is in our control is subject to no master, and to it are naturally attached praise and blame.

I think we've gone through this example before but the best is probably Epicurus own kidney disease. I don't know that he "accepted" it, but he found ways to enjoy life even in the presence of the pain. I think that's the answer to your question - what you can't get rid of you work on diluting with pleasure to the extent possible. That's not a satisfying answer to some, probably, but the fake gods and fake ideals of the Stoics and others are not going to be able to eliminate pain either, despite what they may say, and if they persuade you to give up studying nature and trying to apply your mind to solving your problem and/or diluting your pain, then they are taking away from you any real hope of bettering the situation. Because the hopes offered by supernatural religion and false philosophies aren't real.