

Can We Experience Pleasure in One Part of Our Experience and Pain In Another Part of our Experience At the Same Time?

Post by "Cassius" of January 5, 2020 at 8:57 AM

This is a subject that has come up before and I will probably move this to the ethics subforum later. I see an issue here on the question of how we describe the sum of our experience at any one moment, in which I think there is an issues that (1) our experience at any one moment probably contains all sorts of feelings, mental and physical, but which obviously can't be focused on at one time, and how this relates to (2) pleasure and pain being distinct feelings that never blend together to form a third type of feeling.

This comes up today because I see a facebook comment from [Mike Anyayahan](#) and I composed this comment about it. I'll post it here as a general comment to see what people think about this:

Mike: I saw you posted this on your timeline: "**Mental pleasure exists only when you have peace of mind. Peace of mind exists only when you have no more fears and worries. Fears and worries exist only if you are still wanting. You are still wanting only when you have no limit in what you want.**"

I think I see a thread of thought there which might be worth discussing -- the "only" part. I think it is correct Epicurean thought to point out that pleasure and pain are separate feelings and do not blend together. However it is probably also true that we experience many different types of feelings at different times, and even at the same time in different parts of our experience, so I would think it is possible to experience some feelings of mental pleasure while also having a concern that there are worries that need to be addressed (which I think is probably what peace of mind involves). So I would question the "only." Also, the last two sentences might be read to mean that wants should be extinguished, which I don't think would be a correct Epicurean statement.

And factually, it is probably not true that "you are still wanting only when you have no limit to what you want" is it? I am thinking there that the "limit to what you want" is a conceptual point of view that is highly useful for us to think about in debating the nature of pleasure. However as far as day to day life goes I think you can probably be a good Epicurean, acknowledging that pleasure has a limit (as discussed by PD3, Elayne, and elsewhere in this thread), and still feeling hungry when you have not eaten all day.

These comments are largely nitpicks but I think what you are writing is intended to be seen as a general statement of a "rule." So I am thinking that some of the points could probably be tightened up to be more accurate to the Epicurean viewpoint (which I am presuming is your goal there).