

Managing Expectations In The Study of Epicurus

Post by "Godfrey" of May 9, 2020 at 2:16 PM

I think that one ingredient that needs to be in the cookbook is:

...The feelings are two, pleasure and pain...

...they would be filling themselves full, with pleasures from every source, and never have pain of body or mind, which is the evil of life.

...sober reasoning, searching out the cause of everything we accept or reject, and driving out opinions that cause the greatest trouble in the soul.

DeWitt points out that the greatest pleasure is escaping from a near death experience and realizing the joy of being alive. Taking this to a more prosaic level I think it, and the above italics, emphasize that we're leaving out the pepper if we focus **solely** on pleasure and the potential pains arising from overindulgence. We also need to address pain, as Epicurus most notably did in remedying the fears of the gods and of death. Great pleasure comes from removing a pain.

There are lots of everyday pains and fears that we all experience but which are unique to each of us. Many of these are mild and/or habituated and are misconstrued by the tranquilists as a neutral zone. Searching these out and examining their causes gives one the opportunity to remedy them, sometimes by removing the cause and sometimes through the application of a related pleasure.

In other words, focusing on either feeling to the exclusion of the other leads to an unbalanced diet. I'm beginning to realize that if we understand and use the faculty (not sure that's the right word) of the feelings as a continual interplay between pain and pleasure then the apparent chasm between "absence of pain" and pursuing pleasure disappears. It's actually extremely practical advice for daily living.

Sorry if I got off topic.... I'm just suggesting that one recipe in the cookbook might be for a person to explore what brings them pain as well as what brings them pleasure, and to taste test the interactions between the two.