

Managing Expectations In The Study of Epicurus

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VI. LIFE OF EPICURUS

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The internal sensations they say are two, pleasure and pain, which occur to every living creature, and the one is akin to nature and the other alien : by means of these two choice and avoidance are determined. Of investigations some concern actual things, others mere words. This is a brief summary of the division of their philosophy and their views on the criterion of truth.

Now we must proceed to the letter.

83 Such was his letter on Physics : then follows his letter on Celestial Things.

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VI. VITA EPICURI

Πάθη δὲ λέγουσιν εἶναι δύο, ἡδονὴν καὶ ἀλγηδόνα, ἰστάμενα περὶ πάντων ζῶων, καὶ τὴν μὲν οἰκείον, τὴν δὲ ἀλλότριον· δι' ὧν κρίνεσθαι τὰς αἰρέσεις καὶ φυγὰς. τῶν τε ζητήσεων εἶναι τὰς
10 μὲν περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, τὰς δὲ περὶ ψιλλῆν τὴν φωνήν. καὶ ταῦτα δὲ περὶ τῆς διαιρέσεως καὶ τοῦ κριτηρίου στοιχειωδῶς.
'Ανιτίου δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπιστολήν.

Sequitur epistola ad Herodotum.

83 Καὶ ἦδε μὲν ἐστὶν αὐτῷ ἐπιστολὴ περὶ τῶν φυσικῶν· περὶ δὲ τῶν μετεώρων ἦδε.

Sequitur epistola ad Pythoclem.

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Ταῦτα αὐτῷ καὶ περὶ τῶν μετεώρων δοκεῖ· | περὶ δὲ τῶν βιωτικῶν, καὶ ὅπως χρὴ τὰ μὲν ἡμᾶς αἰρεῖσθαι, τὰ δ' ἐκφεύγειν, οὕτως γράφει. Πρότερον δὲ διέλωμεν ἃ τε αὐτῷ δοκεῖ περὶ τοῦ σοφοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. βλάβας ἐξ
5 ἀνθρώπων ἢ διὰ μῖσος ἢ διὰ φθόνον ἢ διὰ καταφρόνησιν γίνεσθαι, ὧν τὸν σοφὸν λογισμῷ περιγίνεσθαι. ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν ἅπαξ γενόμενον σοφὸν μηκέτι τὴν ἐναντίαν λαμβάνειν διάθεσιν μηδὲ πλάττειν ἐκόντα. πάθεισι μᾶλλον συσχεθῆσεσθαι, (ὁ) οὐκ ἂν ἐμποδίσαι πρὸς τὴν σοφίαν. οὐδὲ μὴν ἐκ

First of all, Herodotus, we must grasp the ideas attached I J
to words, in order that we may be able to refer to them ^{proi}
and so to judge the inferences of opinion or problems of ^{be i}
investigation or reflection, so that we may not either leave ^{thei}
everything uncertain and go on explaining to infinity or ^{mei}
38 use words devoid of meaning. For this purpose it is
essential that the first mental image associated with each
word should be regarded, and that there should be no
need of explanation, if we are really to have a standard to
which to refer a problem of investigation or reflection or
a mental inference. And besides we must keep all our ²
investigations in accord with our sensations, and in par- ^{stai}
ticular with the immediate apprehensions whether of the ^{judi}
mind or of any one of the instruments of judgement,
and likewise in accord with the feelings existing in us,
in order that we may have indications whereby we may
judge both the problem of sense-perception and the
unseen.

Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα τοῖς φθόγγοις, ὧ
Ἡρόδοτε, δεῖ εἰληφέναι, ὅπως ἂν τὰ δοξαζόμενα ἢ ζητούμενα
ἢ ἀπορούμενα ἔχωμεν εἰς ταῦτα ἀναγαγόντες ἐπικρίνειν, καὶ
μὴ ἄκριτα πάντα ἡμῖν (ἢ) εἰς ἄπειρον ἀποδεικνύουσιν ἢ
38 κενοὺς φθόγγους ἔχωμεν. | ἀνάγκη γὰρ τὸ πρῶτον ἐννόημα
καθ' ἕκαστον φθόγγον βλέπεσθαι καὶ μηθὲν ἀποδείξεως
προσδεῖσθαι, εἴπερ ἔξομεν τὸ ζητούμενον ἢ ἀπορούμενον καὶ
δοξαζόμενον ἐφ' ὃ ἀνάξομεν. ἔτι τε κατὰ τὰς αἰσθήσεις
5 δεῖ πάντα τηρεῖν καὶ ἀπλῶς (κατὰ) τὰς παρούσας ἐπιβολὰς
εἴτε διανοίας εἶθ' ὅτου δήποτε τῶν κριτηρίων, ὁμοίως δὲ κατὰ
τὰ ὑπάρχοντα πάθη, ὅπως ἂν καὶ τὸ προσμένον καὶ τὸ ἀδηλον
ἔχωμεν οἷς σημειωσόμεθα.

Ταῦτα δεῖ διαλαβόντας συνορᾶν ἤδη περὶ τῶν ἀδήλων
10 πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι οὐδὲν γίνεται ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος. πᾶν γὰρ
ἐκ παντὸς ἐγίγνετ' αἰ σπερμάτων γε οὐθὲν προσδεόμενον. |
39 καὶ εἰ ἐφθείρετο δὲ τὸ ἀφανιζόμενον εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν, πάντα
ἂν ἀπωλώλει τὰ πράγματα, οὐκ ὄντων εἰς ἃ διελύετο. καὶ
μὴν καὶ τὸ πᾶν αἰεὶ τοιοῦτον ἦν οἷον εἶναι ἔστι, καὶ αἰεὶ τοιοῦτον
ἔσται. οὐθὲν γὰρ ἔστω εἰς ὃ μεταβάλλει. παρὰ γὰρ τὸ
5 πᾶν οὐθὲν ἔστω, ὃ ἂν εἰσελθὼν εἰς αὐτὸ τὴν μεταβολὴν
ποιήσαιτο.

Others to consider:

through itself to bodies. So that those who say that the soul is incorporeal are talking idly. For it would not be able to act or be acted on in any respect, if it were of this nature. But as it is, both these occurrences are clearly distinguished in respect of the soul. Now if one refers all these reasonings about the soul to the standards of feeling and sensation and remembers what was said at the outset, he will see that they are sufficiently embraced in these general formulae to enable him to work out with certainty on this basis the details of the system as well.

that we associate it, and likewise also with internal feelings or absence of feeling, and with movements and states of rest; in connexion with these last again we think of this very perception as a peculiar kind of accident, and in virtue of this we call it time.

And in addition to what we have already said we must believe that worlds, and indeed every limited compound body which continuously exhibits a similar appearance to the things we see, were created from the infinite, and that all such things, greater and less alike, were separated off from individual agglomerations of matter; and that all are again dissolved, some more quickly, some more slowly, some suffering from one set of causes, others from another. And further we must believe that these worlds were

Menoceus:

of the blessed life. For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good.

Principal Doctrines:

XXIV. If you reject any single sensation and fail to distinguish between the conclusion of opinion as to the appearance awaiting confirmation and that which is actually given by the sensation or feeling, or each intuitive apprehension of the mind, you will confound all other sensations as well with the same groundless opinion, so that you will reject every standard of judgement. And if among the mental images created by your opinion you affirm both that which awaits confirmation and that which does not, you will not escape error, since you will have preserved the whole cause of doubt in every judgement between what is right and what is wrong.