

Managing Expectations In The Study of Epicurus

Post by "Cassius" of May 13, 2020 at 9:34 AM

[Quote from Pompadour](#)

If I may, I'm not sure the "cookbook" can answer the question "why do I eat?"

I think you're exactly right to make that distinction, and I know that many people (most people?) don't seem to have a problem going straight to the "let's eat" rather than asking first "why do I eat"?

And yet I think the basic question of "why do I eat" is best considered first - for example in trying to diet for overall health, it's pretty much imperative, is it not, to focus the mind on knowing that unless you control what you eat then ultimately you will lose your health and won't be able to eat after that.

We're discussing this in broad generalities but also:

[Quote from Pompadour](#)

philosophy can help people find meaning

But perhaps "meaning" is not what they should be looking for, and it's impossible to know unless that question of "what should I be looking for?" is answered.

[Quote from Pompadour](#)

From my own perspective, I want to explore Epicurus until I understand the tools well enough to know whether and how they will be **useful to me**.

The word "useful" or "utility" is always so ambiguous. Useful **FOR WHAT?** 😊

I always think back to this statement by Torquatus in On Ends:

Quote

IX. I will start then in the manner approved by the author of the system himself, by settling what are the essence and qualities of the thing that is the object of our inquiry; not that I suppose you to be ignorant of it, but because this is the logical method of procedure. We are inquiring, then, what is the final and ultimate Good, which as all philosophers are agreed must be of such a nature as to be the End to which all other

things are means, while it is not itself a means to anything else. This Epicurus finds in pleasure; pleasure he holds to be the Chief Good, pain the Chief Evil.

But I continue to have the nagging doubt that Epicurus himself might not have put the question the same way, or - if he did - he would have been quick to point out the limitations in dealing with this as a strictly logical question, just as he did in the comment about walking around endlessly talking about the meaning of the good.