

Can an octopus be an Epicurean?

Post by "Cassius" of July 14, 2020 at 9:40 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

For me, it's important to remember that when Epicurus talked about freedom from pain, he couldn't have been talking about ridding oneself of nociception.

So that we eliminate all chance of sounding like a Stoic, I would probably say "*ridding oneself of the FACULTY of nociception...*"

In other words we do want to reduce to the extent possible the particular instances of nociception that are unavoidable or that we choose to accept, but at the same time we also acknowledge the value and preserve the faculty of being able to sense pain when it occurs. The diabetic who cannot feel pain in his feet will burn them walking on hot surfaces, so the faculty of pain is valuable, just as Don is saying.

No doubt there is also a lot to be said for pain-killers that numb physical pain when it cannot be avoided, but the hazards of those are well known and obvious - much like the hazards of adopting stoicism.

At least the patient in pain who takes painkillers does not harangue us that taking the painkillers is virtuous!