

The Early Stoics

Reading 3 – Stoic Ethics in Diogenes' *Lives*

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Book 7 of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*.

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Stoic Ethics in Diogenes' *Lives*

Diogenes Laertius writes:

THE STOICS DIVIDE the ethical part of philosophy into the following topics: on impulse, on good things and bad things, on passions, on virtue, on the end or goal of life, on primary value and actions, on duties or what is fitting, and on exhortations or what encourages and on what discourages or hinders or prevents. This is how Chrysippus, Archedemus,

Zeno of Tarsus, Apollodorus, Diogenes, Antipater, Posidonius, and their followers divide the ethical part of philosophy. Zeno of Citium and Cleanthes, as might be expected from the original thinkers, treated the subject somewhat less elaborately. Nevertheless, along with ethics, they did subdivide both logic and physics.

[85] The Stoics say that an animal's first impulse is to self-preservation since nature endears the animal to itself from the beginning, as Chrysippus affirms in the first part of his work *On the Goal of Life*. There he says that the dearest thing to every animal is its own constitution and the awareness of this. For it is not natural for any animal to be alienated from itself—or even to be brought into such a state so that it is indifferent to itself, being neither alienated from nor friendly to itself. We must assert that nature has made the animal so that it is near and dear to itself. As such, it pushes away all that is harmful and pulls near all that is suitable and fitting.

The Stoics declare false the assertion—made by some—that the first urge or impulse of animals is directed toward pleasure. [86] By contrast they say that pleasure, if it is anything at all, is a byproduct that never comes until nature by itself has sought and taken those things suitable to the animal's constitution—a byproduct that is comparable to animals that have a cheerful expression and plants that are luxuriant or in full bloom.

The Stoics declare that nature originally made no difference between plants and animals. Nature regulates the life of plants without the use of impulse and sensation, just as certain plant-like processes go on in us. But for animals, impulse was added to this general rule of nature later on. Impulse makes animals pursue what is suitable. Nature's rule for animals is to follow the direction of impulse. Lastly, for those beings we call rational, the rational life correctly became the natural life when reason was given to them by means of a more perfect rule. Reason was added to shape impulse as a skilled craftsman.

[87] In his treatise *On the Nature of Man*, Zeno, for the reason given a moment ago, was the first to say that the end or goal of life is to live in agreement with nature, which is the same as living in accord with virtue since nature leads us toward virtue.¹ Cleanthes says the same in his treatise *On Pleasure*, as do Posidonius and Hecaton in their works *On the Goal of Life*. Again, living in accord with virtue is equivalent to living in accord with the experience of nature as it actually happens—just as Chrysippus says in the first

book of his *On the Goal of Life*. For our individual natures are portions of the whole of nature, which is to say the whole cosmos.

[88] This is why the goal of life is to live in conformity with nature—that is, with our own nature as well as with the nature of the whole cosmos. Accordingly, one holds back from every action forbidden by the law common to all things—that is to say, the right reason that pervades all things and is the same as Zeus, who leads the administration of every existing thing. This very thing is the virtue of the happy man and the good flow of life, when all actions promote the harmony of the divine power dwelling in each man with the will of the administrator of the whole cosmos.

So then, Diogenes specifically declares that the goal of life is to act with sound reason in the selection of those things that follow nature. And Archedemus says that the goal is to live while carrying out every duty, that is, whatever is appropriate.

[89] By the nature with which our life should conform, Chrysippus understands both common or universal nature and, more particularly, human nature. But Cleanthes takes the common or universal nature alone as that with which we should conform, without adding the particular human portion of nature.

Virtue is a harmonious disposition, choiceworthy for its own sake—not from fear or hope or any external motive. Happiness consists in virtue, which is the state of the soul that tends to make the whole of life harmonious. And when a rational being is turned aside or perverted, this is due to the persuasiveness of external pursuits or sometimes to the influence of acquaintances, since the starting-points offered by nature are incapable of turning aside or perversion.

[90] Virtue is in one sense the perfection of anything in general, say of a statue. Virtue may be non-intellectual, such as health, or intellectual, such as practical wisdom. Hecaton declares in the first book of his *On the Virtues* that some virtues are knowledge and theory-based—those that have a structure of theoretical principles, such as practical wisdom and justice. Others are non-intellectual—those that are regarded as coextensive and parallel with the former,

such as health and strength. For health follows and is coextensive with the intellectual virtue of moderation just as strength is a result of the building of an arch. [91] The latter are called non-intellectual because they do not require the mind's assent. They come about and occur even in base men—for example, health and courage.

In the first book of his treatise on *Ethics*, Posidonius declares that the proof that virtue really exists is the fact that Socrates, Diogenes, and Antisthenes, as well as their followers,² made moral progress. And vice exists as the opposite of virtue.

In the first book of his work *On the Goal of Life*, Chrysippus says that virtue can be taught. Cleanthes and Posidonius—in the *Exhortations*—and Hecaton declare the same. That virtue can be taught is clear from the case of base men becoming good.

[92] Panaetius says that there are two kinds of virtue, theoretical and practical virtue. Others say there are three kinds—logical, natural, and ethical. That said, the school of Posidonius recognizes four kinds of virtue. And Cleanthes, Chrysippus, Antipater, and their followers count more than four. As for Apollonphanes, he talks about one virtue alone, practical wisdom.

Among the virtues, some are primary, and some are subordinate to these. The following are the primary virtues: practical wisdom, courage, justice, and moderation. Specific virtues are magnanimity, self-control, patient endurance, ready-mindedness, and good counsel.

Stoics define practical wisdom as the knowledge of good and bad things, and what is neither. And courage is the knowledge of what is choiceworthy and what one must be wary of and avoid, and what is neither. [93] And justice . . .³

They define magnanimity as the knowledge or habit that makes one superior to whatever commonly happens to both base and excellent men. Self-control is an unbeatable disposition relative to those things that are in accord with right reason or a habit that is never conquered by pleasure. Patient endurance is the knowledge or habit that suggests what we must—and what we must not—abide by and endure, and what is neither. Ready-mindedness is a habit that discovers the appropriate thing to be done at any

moment. Good counsel is the knowledge by which we see what to do and how to do it if we are to act in a useful and profitable manner.

Similarly, among the vices, some are primary, and some are subordinate. Folly, cowardice, injustice, and immoderation are primary, and lack of self-control, slow-mindedness, and bad counsel are subordinate. The vices are ignorance of those things of which the virtues are the knowledge.

[94] Generally speaking, good is that from which there is some advantage or benefit. More specifically, it is either what is the same as or not different from what is useful or beneficial or advantageous. Therefore, it follows that virtue itself, and whatever participates in virtue, is spoken of as good in three ways: one, as the source from which the benefit results; two, as that according to which the benefit results—for example, the action done according to virtue; and three, as that by the agency of which the benefit results—for example, the excellent man who participates in virtue.

“The fulfillment or perfection of a rational being as a rational being following nature” is another particular definition the Stoics give for the good. Virtue is such a perfection since acts done according to virtue and excellent men are participants in virtue, as are its accompanying byproducts, joy and merriment and like things.

[95] So it is with bad things. They are either vices such as folly, cowardice, injustice, and like things, or they are things that participate in vice, such as acts done in accord with vice and base men, as well as its accompanying byproducts, despair and anxiety and like things.

Again, of good things, some are related to the soul and some to external things, while some are neither related to the soul nor to externals. The goods related to the soul are the virtues and acts done according to virtue. External goods are things such as having an excellent homeland and an excellent friend and the happiness that comes from these. To be excellent and happy in oneself is the sort of good thing that is neither external nor related to the soul.

[96] Conversely, of bad things, some are related to the soul—the vices and actions done according to them.

And some are external things such as a foolish homeland and a foolish friend and the unhappiness of these. To be base and unhappy in oneself is the sort of bad thing that is neither external nor related to the soul.

Further, of good things, some have the nature of ends, some have the nature of means, while some are both ends and means. Accordingly, a friend and the benefits that come from him are the means to good things, whereas courage and highmindedness and freedom and merriment and freedom from pain and every act done according to virtue have the nature of ends.

[97] The virtues are goods that have both the nature of ends and means. Inasmuch as they produce happiness, they are means to good things. On the other hand, inasmuch as they are the fulfillment of happiness, being a portion of happiness itself, they are ends.

Similarly, of bad things, some have the nature of ends, some have the nature of means, while some are both. Your enemy and the harm that comes to you from him are means. Consternation and dejection and slavery and melancholy and depression and extreme grief and every act done according to vice have the nature of ends.

Vices have the nature of both ends and means. Whenever they produce unhappiness, they are means. But whenever they serve to make unhappiness complete, being a portion of unhappiness itself, they are ends.

[98] Again, of the goods related to the soul, some are habits, and some are dispositions, and some are neither habits nor dispositions. The virtues are dispositions, whereas practices are habits. Activities or operations are neither habits nor dispositions.

Generally speaking, there are some mixed goods such as the blessing of children and a good old age. But knowledge is a simple good. Moreover, some goods are permanent, such as the virtues, whereas others are not, such as joy and walking.

Every good is advantageous and binding and profitable and useful and serviceable and beautiful and beneficial and choiceworthy and just. [99] A good is advantageous because it brings about things that benefit us by their occurrence. It is binding because it causes unity where unity is required. It is profitable

inasmuch as it repays all the care that is expended on it so that the return yields a balance of benefit. It is useful because it secures the use of a benefit. It is serviceable because the utility it provides is praiseworthy. It is beautiful because the good is symmetrical with its own use. It is beneficial because it benefits by means of its essential nature. It is choiceworthy because it is such that to choose it is reasonable. It is just because it is in harmony with the law, and it is the means by which partnerships and communities are produced.

[100] The Stoics say that the perfect good is beautiful or noble because it has in full all the factors required by nature or because it is perfectly symmetrical.

Of the beautiful or noble they say that there are four specific kinds—that which is just, courageous, ordered, and knowledgeable. For it is by means of these that one accomplishes beautiful or noble deeds. Analogously, of the ugly or base there are four specific kinds—that which is unjust, cowardly, disorderly, and foolish.⁴

The beautiful or noble uniquely means that good which renders those who possess it praiseworthy. Or it is a good worthy of praise. In another sense, it signifies that which is well-adapted for its own function. Otherwise, it is that which adorns, as when we say that the wise man alone is good and beautiful or noble.

[101] And the Stoics say that the only beautiful or noble thing is a good thing—this according to Hecaton in the third book of his treatise *On Goods*, and Chrysippus in his work *On the Beautiful*. But this is virtue and whatever participates in virtue, which is the same as saying that all that is good is beautiful or noble, or that the term “good” is equivalent to the term “beautiful” or “noble,”—which amounts to the same thing. For when it is good, it is beautiful or noble. But it is beautiful or noble. Therefore, it is good.

They hold that all good things are equal and that every good thing is choiceworthy in the highest degree and admits of no lowering or heightening of intensity.

Of existing things, the Stoics declare that some are good, some are bad, and some are neither. [102] Good things are the virtues, including practical wisdom, justice, courage, moderation, and the rest. Bad things

are the opposite—folly, injustice, and the rest. Things that are neither are those things that neither benefit nor harm—things such as life, health, pleasure, beauty, strength, wealth, good reputation, and noble birth, as well as their opposites, death, disease, pain, ugliness, weakness, poverty, bad reputation, low birth, and the like—this according to Hecaton in the seventh book of his *On the Goal of Life*, and Apollodorus in his *Ethics*, and Chrysippus. These things⁵ are not good things, but they are “things indifferent” —specifically, they are “things preferred.”

[103] For just as being hot, rather than being cold, is the unique property a hot thing, so too is being beneficial, rather than being harmful, the unique property of a good thing. But wealth and health do no more benefit than harm; therefore, neither wealth nor health is a good thing. Moreover, they say that what can be used well and badly is not a good thing. But wealth and health can be used well and badly; therefore, neither wealth nor health is a good thing. Nevertheless, Posidonius maintains that these are also good things. Otherwise, Hecaton, in the ninth book of his treatise *On Goods*, and Chrysippus, in his work *On Pleasure*, declare that pleasure is not a good thing. They say this because some pleasures are shameful, and nothing shameful is a good thing. [104] To benefit is to move or to restrain oneself or something in accord with virtue. To harm is to move or to restrain oneself or something in accord with vice.

The Stoics say that the term “indifferent” has two meanings. For one, it denotes those things that contribute neither to happiness nor to unhappiness—things such as wealth, reputation, health, strength, and like things. It is possible to be happy apart from these things. It is the particular way that we employ these things that makes for happiness or unhappiness. Otherwise, something is indifferent if it neither excites impulse nor disgust for a thing—as with the fact that the number of hairs on your head is odd or even or whether you point or hold back your finger. By contrast, it was not in this latter sense that the former things mentioned above were called indifferent since those things do actually excite inclination or disgust for those things. [105] That is why of those things

having to do with the first kind of indifference, some are chosen, and some are not chosen, whereas of the other things having to do with the second kind, there is an equal reason for choosing or avoiding them.

Regarding indifferent things, they say that some are preferred and some are not preferred—that is, they are rejected. Those things that have value are preferred, while those that do not have value are rejected.

They define value, firstly, as a contribution to a harmonious life. In this sense, every good has value. Secondly, value is some intermediary power or advantage that contributes toward living life in accord with nature. In other words, it is the assistance that wealth and health may offer in living life in accord with nature. Thirdly, value is the price set by an appraiser, as determined by his experience with the facts, as when an appraiser says that wheat is worth so much barley with a mule thrown in to make up the difference.

[106] So then, preferred things are those that have value. For example, among things of the soul, there are natural ability, skill, moral progress, and like things. Among bodily things, there are life, health, bodily strength, vigor, wholeness, beauty, and so on. Among external things, there are wealth, reputation, noble birth, and like things.

As for those things that are rejected, among things of the soul there are a lack of natural ability, a lack of skill, and like things. Among bodily things, there are death, disease, weakness, lethargy, disability, ugliness, and like things. Among external things, there are poverty, bad reputation, low birth, and like things.

Those things that are in neither category are neither preferred nor rejected.

[107] Yet again, of things preferred, some are preferred for their own sake, some for the sake of something else, and others are preferred both for their own sake and for the sake of something else. Those preferred for their own sake include natural ability, moral progress, and like things. Those preferred for the sake of something else include wealth, noble birth, and like things. Those preferred both for their own sake and for the sake of something else include strength, senses that work well, and wholeness.

Things are preferred for their own sake because they are in accord with nature. Things are preferred for the sake of something else because they produce more than a little of what is required or useful. The same may be said to hold true for those things rejected—only the opposite.

Moving on, the Stoics say that duty—what is fitting or appropriate—is that which, when done, may be supported by a reasonable account—for example, whatever is in conformity with living life. This is something that applies both to plant and animal life. For one may perceive, even with these, that which is fitting or appropriate.

[108] Zeno was the first to use the word *kathēkon* for “what is fitting” or “what is appropriate.” Etymologically, it is derived from *kata tinas hēkein*, that is, “belonging to something or someone.” It is a fitting action or activity in relation to nature’s arrangements.

Of actions done in relation to impulse, some are fitting, some are not fitting, and some are neither fitting nor are they not fitting. Those acts that are fitting are the ones that reason within us seizes upon and chooses to do, such as honoring one’s parents, brothers, sisters, and homeland, and adapting oneself to and spending time with one’s friends. Those acts that are not fitting are the ones that reason within us does not choose, such as neglecting one’s parents, ignoring one’s brothers and sisters, failing to be agreeable and available to one’s friends, despising one’s homeland, and like things. [109] Those acts that are neither fitting nor not fitting are the ones that reason neither chooses to do nor forbids, such as picking up a twig, holding a writing utensil or a scraper, and like things.

Again, some things are fitting activities or duties regardless of the circumstances, while others depend on the circumstances. Those fitting activities that do not depend on the circumstances include taking care of one’s health and one’s sense organs and the like. Those that depend on circumstances include, for example, maiming oneself and sacrificing or giving away one’s property.⁶ The same holds analogously for those acts that are not fitting.

Once again, of those acts that are fitting, some are always fitting and some are not always fitting. It is

always fitting to live in accord with virtue. But asking and answering questions and walking around and the like are not always fitting or appropriate. The same explanation goes for acts that are not fitting. [110] There is also a certain kind of fitting activity among intermediate activities. For example, obedience is fitting for boys when they are with those in charge of them.

Moving on, the Stoics say the soul has eight parts. There are the five sense faculties, the vocal part, the intellectual part, which is the intellect itself, and the productive part.

From falsehood or error there arises a distortion or perversion, which extends throughout the intellect. And from this distortion grow many passions or emotions, which are responsible for much confusion and instability.⁷

According to Zeno, a passion or an emotion is itself a motion or an excessive impulse of the soul that is contrary to reason and nature.

According to Hecaton in the second book of his work *On the Passions*, and Zeno in his own treatise *On the Passions*, there are four major kinds of passions: grief, fear, desire, and pleasure.⁸

[111] The Stoics think that the passions are decisions or judgements—this according to what Chrysippus says in *On the Passions*. Avarice, for example, is the assumption that money is noble. It is similar with drunkenness and immoderation and the other passions.

Grief or pain is a contraction of the soul contrary to reason. Specific kinds of grief are pity, envy, jealousy, rivalry, heaviness, annoyance, distress, anguish, and confusion. Pity is the pain felt at undeserved suffering. Envy is the pain felt when one sees the goods of other people. Jealousy is the pain felt when someone has something that one desires. Rivalry is the pain felt when someone possesses what one has. [112] Heaviness is a pain that weighs us down. Annoyance is a pain that confines us and gives us a sense of a lack of room. Distress is a pain brought on by anxious rumination that lasts and increases. Anguish is a difficult pain. Confusion is an irrational pain of the mind that wears one out and prevents one from viewing the situation as a whole.

Fear is the expectation of something bad or

unfortunate. The following come under fear: terror, shame, hesitation, consternation, panic, and mental agony. Terror is a fear that produces fright. Shame is the fear of a bad reputation. Hesitation is the fear that one will have to act. Consternation is fear due to a presentation of some unusual occurrence. [113] Panic is fear after a rush of sound. Mental agony is fear of some uncertain event.

Desire or longing is an appetite that is contrary to reason. The following are arranged under desire: want or lacking, hatred, love of strife, anger, erotic love or desire, wrath, and spiritedness. The state of want or lacking is the failure of desire, when desire does not reach its object but is nevertheless attracted to it in vain, stretching out to it. Hatred is the growing and lasting desire for things to go badly for someone. Love of strife is desire connected with partisanship or a philosophical school. Anger is the desire for revenge against the one who appears to have done one an undeserved injury. Erotic love or desire is a desire that is not present in excellent men. It is the effort to win affection due to the visible presence of beauty. [114] Wrath is a longstanding and vengeful anger, ever-waiting for its chance to act, as is illustrated by the lines, "Even if he swallows down his anger for one day, he will nevertheless hold on to his wrath for the future, until it is satisfied."⁹ Spiritedness is the first stirring of anger.

Pleasure is an elation that is contrary to reason that arises from getting and amassing what seems to be choiceworthy. The following are arranged under pleasure: enchantment, joy in the misfortune of others, delight, and relaxation. Enchantment is pleasure that charms the ear, casting a spell over it, as it were. Joy in the misfortune of others is the pleasure that comes when bad things happen to other people. Delight is, as it were, a turning of the soul. It is a certain stimulus for the soul toward loosening or letting go. And relaxation is the breaking down of virtue.

[115] Moreover, just as we say that there are certain bodily illnesses or infirmities, for example, gout and arthritic disorders, so also are there soul illnesses, such as love of reputation and love of pleasure, and similar things. By illness or infirmity is

meant a disease accompanied by weakness. By disease is meant an excessive notion about something that seems choiceworthy. And just as there is a tendency toward certain maladies in the body, such as the buildup of mucus and diarrhea, so with the soul there is a tendency to enviousness, pitifulness, quarrelsomeness, and similar things.

[116] The Stoics say that there are three good passions: joy, caution, and willing. Joy, the opposite of pleasure, is sensible elation, that is, elation backed by good reason. Caution, that is, discretion or circumspection, is the opposite of fear. It is avoidance backed by good reason, or the reasonable turning of one's course. Even though the wise man will never fear anything, he will nevertheless act with caution. And they say that willing is the opposite of desire insofar as willing is reasonable appetite, that is, appetite backed by good reason.

And so, just as there are certain passions that fall under the primary passions, so also are there certain good passions that fall under the primary good passions. Under willing they arrange goodwill, kindness, being welcoming, and brotherly love. Under caution there are respect or modesty and religious purity. Under joy there are gladness, merriment, and cheerfulness.

[117] They say that the wise man is without passion because he has no such propensities. They add that, in another sense, the same term "without passion" is applied to the base man in that he is unyielding and relentless. Furthermore, the wise man is not puffed up with pride since the esteem of others and a bad reputation are equal to him. That said, he is not the only one who is not puffed up with pride. There is also the base man who behaves randomly, without any purpose. They also say that every excellent man is austere since he does not busy himself with pleasure nor does he tolerate the pleasure-seeking activities of others. They apply the term austere or harsh to others in the sense that one says that wine is harsh when it is used as a medicine rather than for drinking.

[118] Wise men are genuinely earnest for and attentive to their own improvement, employing a manner of life that hides the base away while making

what good there is in things appear. And they are not fake or phony. Rather, they have stripped themselves of all affectation in both voice and appearance. And they refrain from meddling in politics, declining to do anything except for what is fitting. And they will drink wine, but they will not get drunk. Nor will they go crazy. To be sure, strange presentations will occur at times, those that are due to melancholy or delirium—not according to the principle of what is choice-worthy but contrary to nature. Nor will the wise man feel grief because grief is an irrational contraction of the soul as Apollodorus declares in his *Ethics*.

[119] Wise men are godly or divine, for they have something like a God within them. But the base man is godless. The term “godless” has two senses: one is opposite of the meaning of “godly.” The other disregards the divine. The latter sense does not apply to every base man.

Wise men are also religious. They are experienced with the laws and customs having to do with the gods—and piety is the knowledge of how to serve the gods. Furthermore, they will sacrifice to the gods and keep themselves pure since they will avoid all acts that are a failure before the gods. And the gods admire them since they are holy and just relative to the divine.

Only wise men are priests since they have examined matters having to do with sacrifices, temple construction, purifications, and other things having to do with the gods.

[120] The Stoics also hold that the wise man will honor and do homage to his parents and brothers and sisters in the second place after the gods. They further declare that parental affection for children is natural for the wise but not for the base.

The Stoics hold that all failures or sins¹⁰ are equal—this according to what Chrysippus says in the fourth book of his *Ethical Inquiries*, as well as Persaeus and Zeno. For if one truth is not more true than another truth, then neither is one falsehood more false than another falsehood. In the same way, one deception is not more deceptive than another deception, nor is one failure or sin more of a failure or more sinful than another failure or sin. For the man who is one hundred stadia from Canopus and the man who is only one stadium

away are equally not in Canopus.¹¹ In this way, the man who commits the greater and the one who commits the smaller sin are equally behaving incorrectly. [121] Nevertheless, Heraclides of Tarsus, the follower of Antipater of Tarsus, and Athenodorus both assert that failures or sins are not equal.

The Stoics say that the wise man will participate in politics if nothing prevents him—so declares Chrysippus in the first book of his work *On Various Types of Life*. He will do this to restrain vice and promote virtue.

And he will marry, as Zeno says in his *Republic*. And he will have children.

Moreover, they say that the wise man will never form mere opinions—that is, he will never assent to anything that is false.

They say that the wise man will live like a Cynic since Cynicism is the shortest road to virtue, as Apollodorus says in his *Ethics*.¹²

Depending on the circumstances, the wise man will eat human flesh.

The wise man alone is free, and base men are slaves—for freedom is independent action, whereas slavery is the loss of independent action. [122] That said, there is another form of slavery that consists in submission, and a third which consists in both possession by and submission to another. Being a despot or master is the opposite—and this is also base.

Wise men are not only free, but they are also kings. This is so since kingship is a kind of absolute freedom that no one but the wise can maintain. That is what Chrysippus says in his treatise vindicating Zeno's use of terminology. For he says that the ruler should know about good and bad things, and that no base man understands these things. Similarly, they alone are fit to be magistrates, judges, or orators, whereas among the base there is not one who is qualified in this way.

Furthermore, the wise are without fault or sin and are not liable to sin or error. [123] And they are harmless since they do not harm others or themselves. At the same time, they are not full of pity and make no allowance for anyone. They never relax the penalties fixed by the laws since indulgence and pity and even

equitable consideration are the signs of a weak soul that substitutes kindness for chastisement. Nor do they suppose that such punishments are too severe.

Again, they say that the wise man is never astonished by any of the things that appear extraordinary—things such as Charon's caverns and tidal currents and hot springs and fiery eruptions.

Neither will the wise and excellent man live in solitude since he is naturally made for a community and action.

Indeed, the wise man will submit to training or exercise in order to build up his body's power to endure.

[124] The Stoics say that the wise man will offer prayers and ask for good things from the gods—this according to what Posidonius says in the first book of his treatise *On What is Fitting*, and Hecaton in his third book *On Paradoxes*.

They say that friendship only exists between excellent men because of their similarity. And by friendship they mean the common use of all that has to do with life, where we treat our friends as ourselves. They say that a friend is choiceworthy for his own sake and that it is a good thing to have many friends. But among the base, there is no such thing as friendship. And so, no base man has a friend.

They also hold that the foolish are all mad. They are not wise. Rather, the source of all they do is their madness, which is the same as their folly.

[125] The wise man does everything well in the same way that we say Ismenias plays everything well on the flute. Moreover, everything belongs to the wise. For the law, they say, has given them complete authority over everything. It is true that certain things are said to belong to the base, just as that which has been dishonestly acquired may be said, in one sense, to belong to the state, and in another sense to those who are using it.

The Stoics hold that the virtues involve one another. The man who has one virtue has them all inasmuch as the virtues have common principles—this according to what Chrysippus declares in the first book of his work *On Virtues*, and Apollodorus in his *Natural Philosophy According to the Early Stoics*, and Hecaton in the third book of his treatise *On Virtues*.

[126] For he who is virtuous is able to perceive and practice what is to be done. And what is to be done is choiceworthy. And what is to be done is also what is to be endured and what one must stay with. And it is what is justly assigned. Consequently, if one does some things by choice, and some with endurance, and some by means of just assignment, and some by staying power, then he is wise and courageous and just and moderate.

Each of the virtues has a particular subject with which it is concerned. For example, courage is concerned with things that must be endured. Practical wisdom with what is to be done, and what is not to be done, and what is neither. Similarly, each of the other virtues has to do with their own proper things.

Good counsel and understanding follow upon practical wisdom. And good order or discipline and propriety or decorum follow upon moderation. And equality and fair-mindedness upon justice. And unshakeable determination and vigor upon courage.

[127] The Stoic belief is that there is no middle ground between virtue and vice, whereas the Peripatetics say that there is the middle ground of moral progress. The Stoics declare that just as a stick must be either straight or crooked, so a man must either be just or unjust. Neither are there degrees of justice and injustice. The same is the case for the other virtues.

Moreover, while Chrysippus holds that virtue can be lost, Cleanthes maintains that it cannot be lost. Chrysippus says that it can be lost through drunkenness and melancholy. Cleanthes says it cannot be lost because of the certainty of our perceptions.

Virtue is choiceworthy in itself and for its own sake. We are, anyway, ashamed when we do things badly. It is as though we know that the beautiful or noble alone is good.

Moreover, virtue is sufficient in itself for happiness—this according to what Zeno says, as well as Chrysippus in the first book of his treatise *On Virtues*, and Hecaton in the second book of his treatise *On Goods*. [128] "For," Zeno says, "if magnanimity is sufficient for making one superior to all things, and if magnanimity is a part of virtue, then virtue is sufficient for happiness, looking down on those things that

seem troublesome.” Both Panaetius and Posidonius, however, deny that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Rather, they say that health is necessary as well as some means of living and strength. And, in their view, virtue is exercised in everything—as Cleanthes and his followers declare. For virtue can never be lost since the excellent man is always utilizing a soul that is in perfect condition.

They say that justice exists by nature and not by convention, just as the law and right reason do—this according to what Chrysippus says in his work *On the Beautiful*.¹³

[129] The Stoics do not believe that disagreement among the philosophers is any reason for abandoning the study of philosophy since given this point one would forsake life altogether—this according to what Posidonius says in his *Exhortations*.

Chrysippus declares that the ordinary or general Greek education is useful.

Again, it is the Stoic belief that there is no justice between us human beings and other animals because they are so unlike us—this according to what Chrysippus says in the first book of his treatise *On Justice*, and Posidonius in the first book of his *On What is Fitting*.

Moreover, the Stoics say that the wise man will be in love with young men who, by their countenance, show a natural endowment for virtue—this according to what Zeno says in his *Republic*, Chrysippus in book one of his work *On Modes of Life*, and Apollodorus in his *Ethics*.

[130] Erotic love or desire is the effort to win affection due to the visible presence of beauty. It is not about sex, but friendship. Anyway, even though

Thrasonides had the one he loved in his power, he did not touch her because she hated him. So then, as Chrysippus says in his treatise *On Love*, erotic love or desire is for affectionate friendship. And it is not sent by the gods. And beauty they describe as the bloom or flower of virtue.

Of the three kinds of life—the speculative or contemplative, the practical or active, and the logical or rational—they declare that we should choose the third life. For the rational animal was designedly brought into being by nature for contemplation and action.

The Stoics declare that the wise man will make his own exit from life for good reason—for the sake of his homeland or his friends or if he is experiencing unyielding pain or multiple disabilities or incurable disease.

[131] It is also their belief that there should be a community of wives among the wise with a free choice of partners, as Zeno says in his *Republic*, and Chrysippus in his treatise *On Government*—as well as Diogenes the Cynic and Plato.¹⁴ Under these circumstances, we will equally feel paternal affection for all the resulting children. Moreover, the jealousies arising from adultery will be removed.

They hold that the best form of government is a mixture of democracy and monarchy and aristocracy.

Such, then, are the things they say in their ethical teachings—with much more as well, along with suitable explanations and proofs. Nevertheless, may these be enough for a general statement of them in summary and elementary form.

So ends Reading 3. **See you in Reading 4, “Zeno of Citium in Diogenes’ Lives.”**

NOTES

¹ Virtue (*aretē*), in the broadest sense, means excellence. In *Lives* 7.90, Diogenes Laertius explains that “virtue is in one sense the perfection of anything in general.” To learn more about what the ancient Greeks thought and said about *aretē*, see the Cave’s *Aretē: Excellence or Virtue*.

² Antisthenes of Athens and Diogenes of Sinope and “their followers” were Cynic philosophers. To learn more about the ancient Cynics and Cynicism, that which inspired the early Stoics and Stoicism, see the Cave’s *The Best of the Cynics: The Lives, Writings & Teachings of the Ancient Cynics*.

READING 3 ▪ STOIC ETHICS IN DIOGENES' LIVES

³ There is a lacuna or gap here in the text. Johannes Stobaeus reports that Zeno defined justice as “knowledge of the distribution of valuable things to each man” (*Anthology* 2.5). See Thirteen of Part 4.

⁴ Note that the one word *kalos*, a multivalent word, is behind “beautiful or noble.” Similarly, *aischros* is behind “ugly or base.”

⁵ Diogenes Laertius means the first part of the list, “life, health, pleasure, beauty, strength, wealth, good reputation, and noble birth.”

⁶ “Maiming oneself” may sound like an odd example. But there are several instances from ancient history in which a man dutifully maims himself—to infiltrate a city, for example. See Herodotus, *Histories* 3.153-160.

⁷ One word (*pathos*) is behind “passion or emotion” or “passions or emotions.” Both are sometimes given in order to offer a broader range of meaning. Otherwise, where you see “passion” or “passions” alone, understand that the words “emotion” or “emotions” are implied.

⁸ For a chart of the passions, including Greek terms used for each, see “The Passions” in “Other Matters of Interest Related to the Early Stoics.” Grief may also be given as “pain,” as in “pain of the mind.” According to Cicero’s logic (see *Tusculan Disputations* 4.11 below in Ten of Part 3), grief or pain is paired with pleasure, which Cicero prefers to call “delight,” in that each is the experience of a present (imagined) evil or good, whereas fear and desire is the experience of fearing or desiring a future (imagined) evil or good.

⁹ See Homer, *Iliad* 1.81-82.

¹⁰ The one word *hamartēma* is behind “failure or sin.”

¹¹ The stadium (*stadion*) or stade is about 600 feet.

¹² To read the late Stoic Epictetus’ discourse (3.22) on the true nature of the Cynic way of life, see Fourteen of the Cave’s *The Best of the Cynics: The Lives, Writings & Teachings of the Ancient Cynics*.

¹³ The Stoic position is in contrast to that of Epicurus, who said, “There is no such thing as justice in itself. Rather, justice is an agreement neither to harm nor be harmed that is made when men gather together from time to time in various places.” See Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 33, which may be found in the Cave’s *The Best of Epicurus: The Life, Writings & Teachings of Epicurus the Greek Philosopher*.

¹⁴ See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 6.72, where he reports that “Diogenes [the Cynic] argued that women should be held in common. . . . For this reason, he also held that sons should be held in common.” The passage may be found in Five of the Cave’s *The Best of the Cynics: The Lives, Writings & Teachings of the Ancient Cynics*. As for Plato (or Socrates), see the *Republic*, 5.449 ff.

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