

# *Aretē: Excellence or Virtue*

## Reading 4 – Zeno of Citium & the Early Stoics

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"Virtue is a kind of health and beauty and good condition of the soul." – Plato

"Virtue is a weapon that cannot be taken away." – Antisthenes

"Happiness is an activity of the soul that accords with perfect virtue." – Aristotle

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### Reading 4

#### Zeno of Citium & the Early Stoics

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This reading comes from the Cave's

*Aretē: Excellence or Virtue—What the Ancient Greeks Thought and Said about Aretē.*

As the title indicates, this reading, after a brief introduction, presents what Zeno of Citium and the early Stoics thought and said about *aretē*, including a summary at the end.

**Z**ENO (c. 335-263 BC) WAS A philosopher from Citium (Cyprus). He is known as the founder of Stoicism. Inspired by the ideas and example of Socrates, he eventually learned from and practiced with the Cynic Crates of Thebes, as well as other philosophers, before setting out on his own to found his own school. Other significant early Stoics were Cleanthes of Assos (c. 331-232 BC) and Chrysippus of Soli (c. 280-207 BC).

Zeno lectured in a covered colonnade (called in Greek a *stoa*—and so the name Stoic or Stoicism) on

the edge of Athens' marketplace. There he explained that the cosmos consists of matter and mind, or divine reason, which makes, orders, and governs that which is natural. What is natural, therefore, is rational (in a sense). Consequently, Zeno taught that humans should seek to be rational by means of participating in divine rationality and by judging well. Doing so they would be virtuous, thereby attaining the highest good, the virtuous and thus happy life (for a summary of the early Stoic view of *aretē*, see the end of the chapter).

As with the other schools of ancient philosophy, the Stoics had an enormous impact on those who later wished to pursue a life of philosophy and virtue.

Though we could have added others, all passages come from Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*.<sup>1</sup>

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*History does not record the titles of any works by Zeno of Citium that were specifically about virtue (though he would have certainly addressed virtue in several of his works—for instance, in On Life According to Nature, and in On Impulse, or On Human Nature, and in On Duty). As for other early Stoics, Cleanthes of Assos and Chrysippus of Soli, for instance, we do possess a few titles of their works about virtue—all of which are now unfortunately lost.<sup>2</sup> For examples, see the following selections.*

*Diogenes Laertius Cleanthes, the son of Phantias, . . . wrote On the Virtues and On the Notion that Virtue Is the Same for Men and Women.<sup>3</sup>*

*Diogenes Laertius Chrysippus, the son of Apollonius . . . wrote On the Difference between the Virtues (addressed to Diodorus, in four books), On the Kinds of Virtues (in one book), and On the Virtues (addressed to Pollis, in two books).<sup>4</sup>*

*Next, we learn of the widespread reputation that Zeno of Citium had for his ability to instruct in the life of virtue and for a happiness that was tied to the same.*

*Letter from Antigonus to Zeno King Antigonus to Zeno the philosopher, greeting. I consider myself superior to you in glory and wealth. But in reason and education, and in the perfect happiness you have attained, I acknowledge that I am far behind you. . . . By all means, then, do your best to meet with me, understanding that you will not only be instructing me but all the Macedonians together. For he who teaches the Macedonian ruler and guides him along the path of virtue will also be training his subjects to be good men. For as the ruler is, so, for the most part, we may expect*

*the subjects to become.<sup>5</sup>*

*Letter from Zeno to Antigonus Zeno to king Antigonus, greeting. I welcome your love of learning inasmuch as you hold to the truth that stretches out toward advantage . . . If anyone has longed for philosophy, turning away from well-known pleasure, . . . it is clear that he is inclined to nobility of life not only by nature but by deliberate choice. If any man with a nature such as yours receives a reasonable amount of training in terms of ungrudging instruction, he will easily reach perfect virtue. As for me, I am unable to join you due to old age and subsequent bodily weakness—I am eighty years old. But I send to you certain men who have studied with me. . . . If you join with these men, then you will lack nothing that is necessary for perfect happiness.<sup>6</sup>*

*Although Zeno of Citium was not from Athens, the Athenians nevertheless honored him for his life of virtue.*

*Diogenes Laertius The Athenians buried Zeno of Citium in the Ceramicus and honored him . . . bearing witness to his virtue.<sup>7</sup>*

*Diogenes Laertius (the text of a decree that the people of Athens passed regarding Zeno) Whereas Zeno of Citium, the son of Mnaseas, has for many years been devoted to philosophy in the city and has continued to be a good man in all other respects, exhorting to virtue and moderation those of the youth who come to him to be taught, directing them to what is most excellent, offering to all in his own manner of living a pattern for imitation in perfect conformity with his teaching, it has seemed good to the people—and may it so happen—to bestow praise on Zeno of Citium, the son of Mnaseas, and to crown him with a golden crown according to the law for his virtue and moderation.<sup>8</sup>*

*Turning to their views, the early Stoics teach that the happy life is the virtuous life. Virtue “is the only good,” they say. Virtue guards “the lives of men and cities.” In itself, virtue is enough for happiness.*

*Diogenes Laertius* Happiness consists in virtue, which is the state of the soul that tends to make the whole of life harmonious.<sup>9</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* Athenaeus the epigrammatist speaks of all the Stoics in common as follows: “You who are acquainted with the words of the Stoic Porch, you have committed to your divine books the best of teachings, that virtue of the soul is the only good. Her decrees alone protect the lives of men and cities. But those other men who declare that the goal of life is the enjoyment of the flesh are ruined by one of the Muses, the daughters of Memory.”<sup>10</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* The Stoics hold that virtue is sufficient in itself to ensure happiness.<sup>11</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* In the second book of *On Life and Earning a Living*, while considering how a wise man should earn a living, Chrysippus says, “And yet why should he earn a living? After all, if it is for the sake of life, life is a thing indifferent. And if it is for pleasure, it is also indifferent. And if it is for virtue, it is sufficient in itself for happiness.”<sup>12</sup>

*Still, there are some Stoics who believe that, in addition to virtue, other goods are required for happiness.*

*Diogenes Laertius* Both Panaetius and Posidonius . . . deny that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Rather, they say that health is necessary, as well as some means of living, and strength.<sup>13</sup>

*In the next selections, we follow the general Stoic argument for why virtue is happiness.*

*The first point is that the “the end or goal of life is to live in agreement with nature, which is the same as living according to virtue.”*

*Why is such a life virtuous and thus happy-making? It is because it is in harmony with Zeus or “the right reason that pervades all things.”*

*What is the significance of Zeus—reason or mind—pervading all things? In short, it is because Zeus through nature or as nature regulates all animals by means of*

*impulse. The first impulse of any animal is toward self-preservation rather than pleasure. For human beings, Zeus (again, reason or mind) gives reason in addition to impulse so that the latter may be shaped in a skillful manner. Such a reason-based shaping or formation of impulse results in a rational life. To live in such a way means that one is living in conformity with nature and so with virtue, a life which is sufficient for happiness.*

*Diogenes Laertius* In his treatise *On the Nature of Man*, Zeno . . . 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 according to virtue since nature leads us toward virtue. Cleanthes says the same in his treatise *On Pleasure*, as do Posidonius and Hecaton in their works *On the Goal of Life*. Again, living according to virtue is equivalent to living according to 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.<sup>14</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* 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.<sup>15</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* 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. 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. . . .

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.<sup>16</sup>

*But what is the nature of virtue? The following passages give some idea. Of significance is the notion that virtue is “the perfection of anything in general,” and the belief in the unity or essential relation of virtue (that “the virtues involve one another”), as well as the primacy of some virtues (practical wisdom, courage, justice, and moderation). For the Stoics, skill in dialectic is virtue. Finally, “there is no middle ground between virtue and vice.”*

*Diogenes Laertius* 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.<sup>17</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* Virtue is a harmonious disposition, choiceworthy for its own sake—not from hope or fear or any external motive.<sup>18</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* (giving the view found in several ancient authors—*Chrysippus, Apollodorus, and Hecaton*) 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.<sup>19</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* Among the virtues some are primary, and some are subordinate to these. The following are the primary virtues: practical wisdom, courage, justice, and moderation. . . . Similarly, among the vices, some are primary, and some are subordinate. Folly, cowardice, injustice, and immoderation are primary. The vices are ignorance of those things of which the virtues are the knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* 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.<sup>21</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* Specific virtues are magnanimity, self-control, patient endurance, ready mindedness, and good counsel. . . . 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.<sup>22</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* The Stoics hold that dialectic itself is necessary and a virtue, and that it encompasses the other kinds of virtues.<sup>23</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* 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 be either just or unjust. Neither are there degrees of justice and injustice. The same is the case for the other virtues.<sup>24</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* [The Stoic] Herillus of Carthage declared that everything that is found between virtue and vice is indifferent.<sup>25</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* The Stoics hold that all failures or sins 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 truer 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. In this way, the man who commits the greater and the one who commits the smaller sin are equally behaving incorrectly. Nevertheless, Heraclides of Tarsus, the follower of Antipater of Tarsus, and Athenodorus both assert that failures or sins are not equal.<sup>26</sup>

*Next up are several selections that explore the nature of the good (or good things) and its relation to virtue, happiness, and beauty. Relative to happiness, virtues are goods (beneficial, advantageous things) that can have either the nature of an end or a means to an end. Beauty itself is the “bloom of virtue.”*

*Diogenes Laertius* 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.<sup>27</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* “The fulfillment or perfection of a rational being as a rational being following nature” is another particular definition the Stoics give for the good.<sup>28</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* 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.<sup>29</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* Some goods have the nature of ends or goals. Some have the nature of means. Some are both ends and means at the same time. . . . 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 the virtues are the fulfillment of happiness, being a portion of happiness itself, they are ends.<sup>30</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* All that is good is beautiful. . . . And beauty they describe as the bloom or flower of virtue.<sup>31</sup>

*As the following selections demonstrate, the Stoics divide all things into three categories: good things, bad things, and things that are neutral, which is to say neither good nor bad. The virtues are good things. The Stoics term neutral things “indifferent,” some of which are “preferred” and some of which are “rejected,” depending on a thing’s value.*

*Diogenes Laertius* Of things that are, the Stoics declare that some are good, some are bad, and some are neither.

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. . . .

These things are not good [or bad] things, but they are “things indifferent.” . . . 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 are good things. . . . To benefit is to move and maintain according to virtue, and to harm is to move and maintain according to 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 similar 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 does not excite impulse or disgust for a thing—as with the fact that the number of hairs on one’s 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. 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 rejected or not preferred. Those things that have worth or value are preferred, while those that do not have worth or value are rejected.

They define worth or 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 according to nature. In other words, it is the assistance that wealth and health may offer in living life according to nature. . . .

Preferred things are those that have value. For example, among things of the soul, there are natural ability, skill, moral progress, and similar 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 similar 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 the like.

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

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 the like. 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 for those things rejected—only the opposite.<sup>32</sup>

*The next few selections offer the early Stoic understanding of duty, that is, acting in such a way that is fitting or appropriate. “It is always fitting to live according to virtue.” Consequently, to live a rational and virtuous life, one must carry out one’s duty.*

*Diogenes Laertius* The Stoics say that duty or 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.

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 not fitting. Those acts which 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 which 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. Those acts which 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 duties or fitting activities regardless of the circumstances, while others depend on the circumstances. Those duties or 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. The same holds analogously for those acts that are not fitting.

Once again, of those things which are fitting, some are always fitting, and some are not always fitting. It is always fitting to live according to 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.<sup>33</sup>

*The following selections present the early Stoic teaching regarding the soul and its parts; how error and the passions*

*or emotions arise within the soul; what passion is (that passions are “contrary to reason and nature” and, thus, we can conclude, to virtue); and, finally, what may be considered the unhealthy or irrational versus the healthy or rational passions or emotions, which is to say those that tend toward unhappiness or happiness, respectively.*

*Diogenes Laertius* 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.

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

The Stoics think that the passions or emotions 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.<sup>34</sup>

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

Grief or pain is a contraction of the soul contrary to reason. . . .

Fear is the expectation of evil, or misfortune. . . .

Desire or longing is an appetite that is contrary to reason. . . . The state of want or lacking [which falls under the passion of desire] is the failure of desire, when desire does not reach its object but is nevertheless attracted to it in vain, stretching out to it. . . .

Pleasure is an elation that is contrary to reason that arises from getting and amassing what seems to be choiceworthy.<sup>35</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* The Stoics say that there are three

good passions or states of the soul: 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.<sup>36</sup>

*We end with the Stoic conception of the nature of the wise man—what the wise man is, what he will do, and what he will not do. The following is a compilation of such statements. Though the equation is not explicitly made, for the Stoics, the wise man is by definition virtuous.*

*Diogenes Laertius* The wise man is . . . good and beautiful . . . without passion . . . free from vanity, for he is indifferent to good or evil report . . . austere or harsh since he neither has dealings with pleasure nor tolerates those who have such dealings . . . earnest for and attentive to his own improvement, employing a manner of life that banishes evil out of sight and makes what good there is in things appear . . . godlike, for he has something divine within himself (whereas the thoughtless man is godless) . . . a worshipper of god . . . holy and just in what concerns the gods . . . free, whereas bad men are slaves—where freedom is the power of independent action and slavery is the opposite . . . unharmed, for he does not harm others or himself . . . not pitiful and makes no allowance for anyone; he never relaxes the penalties fixed by the laws since indulgence and pity and even equitable consideration are signs of a weak soul that substitutes kindness for chastisement.<sup>37</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* The wise man will . . . take part in politics . . . marry . . . offer prayers . . . do everything well in the same way that we say Ismenias plays everything well on the flute.<sup>38</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* The wise man will not . . . live in solitude since he is naturally made for a community and action . . . form mere opinions—that is, he will never assent to anything that is false.<sup>39</sup>

*Diogenes Laertius* Ariston of Chios, the Bald, who was nicknamed “the Siren,” declared that the goal of life was to live in a state of indifference to everything between virtue and vice. He did not recognize variation among things indifferent but treated them all alike. Accordingly, he said that the wise man is like a good actor, who, if called on to take the part of a Thersites or of an Agamemnon, will impersonate them in a suitable manner.<sup>40</sup>

#### SUMMARY OF ARETĒ FOR ZENO OF CITIUM & THE EARLY STOICS

For Zeno of Citium and the early Stoics, virtue is, generally speaking, the perfection of a thing. More specifically, humans are virtuous when they live in conformity with nature. For human beings, the natural life is a rational life, meaning a life that allows reason “to shape impulse in a skillful manner.” Impulse itself is something provided by nature, and is that which causes animals, including human beings, to “pursue what is suitable.” Human beings have a duty to do what is fitting or suitable.

As indicated, for humans, the rational life itself is the same as the virtuous life. To live virtuously is to live in harmony with “the right reason that pervades all things and is the same as Zeus.” Humans, however, often act in accord with passion, which is “a motion or excessive impulse of the soul that is contrary to reason and nature.” Such passions are judgments or false assumptions. These drive humans to seek or flee “indifferent things” (things that are neither good nor bad, virtuous nor vicious).

In summary, the virtuous life is a life lived according to reason in agreement with nature. Such a life is a happy life.

So ends Reading 4. See you in Reading 5, “Isocrates.”

## READING 4 ▪ ZENO OF CITIUM & THE EARLY STOICS

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For an introduction to early Stoicism, and for other passages related to early Stoic logic, physics (natural philosophy), and ethics (including *aretē*), see *The Best of the Early Stoics: The Lives, Writings & Teachings of the Early Stoics* (Sugar Land: The Classics Cave, 2023).
- <sup>2</sup> For a list of Zeno of Citium's writings, see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.4.
- <sup>3</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.168, 175.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.179, 202.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.7.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.8-9.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.29.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.10-11.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.89.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.30.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.127. Diogenes Laertius further explains that this teaching is "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*."
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.188-189.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.128. Both were later Stoics of the Middle Stoa. Panaetius of Rhodes lived from c. 185 to 109 BC. Posidonius of Apamea lived from c. 135 to c. 51 BC.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.87. Hecaton lived during the first century BC.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.88.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.85-86; 88. The assertion "made by some" regarding the first "impulse of animals . . . toward pleasure" refers to either the Epicureans or the Cyrenaics.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.90.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.89.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.125.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.92, 93.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.92. Alas, we do not know how Diogenes Laertius gave the early Stoic definition of moderation or justice because there is a gap in the text. In his *Anthology* 2, Johannes Stobaeus (fifth century AD) gives the early Stoic definition of the two this way: "Moderation is knowledge of what is to be chosen and what is to be avoided and what is neither. And justice is knowledge of the distribution of valuable things to each man." Regarding moderation and its opposite, Cicero, in the *Tusculan Disputations* 4.22, has one interlocutor, "M.," state: "The Stoics say that the fount of all disorders is immoderation or intemperance, which is a revolt from all guidance of the mind and right reason, so completely alien from the control of reason that the cravings of the soul cannot be guided or curbed. Therefore, just as moderation or temperance slays the cravings and causes them to obey right reason, and maintains the well-considered judgments of the mind, so its enemy immoderation or intemperance kindles, confounds, and agitates the whole condition of the soul, with the result that from it come distress and fear and all other disorders."
- <sup>22</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.92, 93.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.46. For the Stoic understanding of dialectic or skill in dialectic (*dialektikos*), see *ibid.*, 7.42-44.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.127. The Peripatetics were the inheritors of Aristotle's investigations and teachings. For an explanation of the Peripatetic or Aristotelian "middle ground of moral progress," see Aristotle's ladder to virtue described above in 9, "Aristotle."
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.165. Herillus of Carthage was a student of Zeno of Citium. Considered a heterodox Stoic, he declared that knowledge is the goal of life.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.120-121. Persaeus of Citium lived from c. 306 to c. 243 BC. The latter three were Stoics who lived in the second and first centuries BC.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.94.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.94.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.95.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.96-97.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.101, 130.

## READING 4 ▪ ZENO OF CITIUM & THE EARLY STOICS

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 7.101-107. A third definition of value: “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.”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 7.107-109. “Maiming oneself” might sound like an odd example, but there are several instances from ancient history in which a man dutifully maims himself, for example, to infiltrate a city. For one, see Herodotus, *Histories* 3.153-160.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 7.110-111.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 7.110-114. Diogenes adds this: “Moreover, just as we say that there are certain bodily illnesses or infirmities, for example, gout and arthritic disorders, so also there are soul illnesses, such as love of reputation and love of pleasure, and the like. 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 the like.” (ibid., 7.115).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 7.116.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 7.100, 117-123.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 7.121, 124-125.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 7.123, 121.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 7.160. In Homer’s *Iliad*, Thersites is a commoner who upbraids Agamemnon, the leading man of the Achaeans (see *Iliad* 2.210-267).

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“Virtue is a weapon that cannot be taken away.” —Antisthenes

“Happiness is an activity of the soul that accords with perfect virtue.” —Aristotle

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