

Differences between Epicureanism and Cyrenaicism

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 4, 2021 at 2:02 PM

[Quote from Diogenes Laertius](#)

"He differs from the Cyrenaics with regard to pleasure. They do not include under the term the pleasure which is a state of rest, but only that which consists in motion. Epicurus admits both; also pleasure of mind as well as of body, as he states in his work *On Choice and Avoidance* and in that *On the Ethical End*, and in the first book of his work *On Human Life* and in the epistle to his philosopher friends in Mytilene.

So also Diogenes in the seventeenth book of his *Epilecta*, and Metrodorus in his *Timocrates*, whose actual words are: "Thus Pleasure being conceived both as that species which consists in motion and that which is a state of rest." The words of Epicurus in his work *On Choice* are : "Peace of mind and freedom from pain are pleasures which imply a state of rest; joy and delight are seen to consist in motion and activity."

He further disagrees with the Cyrenaics in that they hold that pains of body are worse than mental pains; at all events evil-doers are made to suffer bodily punishment; whereas Epicurus holds the pains of the mind to be the worse; at any rate the flesh endures the storms of the present alone, the mind those of the past and future as well as the present. In this way also he holds mental pleasures to be greater than those of the body."

"And as proof that pleasure is the end he adduces the fact that living things, so soon as they are born, are well content with pleasure and are at enmity with pain, by the prompting of nature and apart from reason. Left to our own feelings, then, we shun pain; as when even Heracles, devoured by the poisoned robe, cries aloud,

"And bites and yells, and rock to rock resounds,
Headlands of Locris and Euboean cliffs."

"And we choose the virtues too on account of pleasure and not for their own sake, as we take medicine for the sake of health. So too in the twentieth book of his *Epilecta* says Diogenes, who also calls education recreation. Epicurus describes virtue as the sine qua non of pleasure, i.e. the one thing without which pleasure cannot be,

everything else, food, for instance, being separable, i.e. not indispensable to pleasure."

Come, then, let me set the seal, so to say, on my entire work as well as on this philosopher's life by citing his [Principal Doctrines](#), so to bring the whole work to a close and making the end of it to coincide with the beginning of happiness:"

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So this highlights both the pleasure of rest and the pleasure of action...

....so both "the cake AND the frosting". 😊