

Valueless Virtue in Modern Stoicism

Post by “Matt” of January 10, 2019 at 8:48 AM

If you were to ask me what my main issue is with “MoStoicism” The answer would have to be the “virtue for the sake virtue” dilemma that appears throughout the Modern philosophy.

As opposed to a historical Traditional Stoicism, which is much closer to a theistic religion, many Modern Stoics tend to view their philosophy devoid of the trademark pantheistic Providence.

This is an ENORMOUS issue.

Why? Your virtue is your own.

Rather than virtue being dictated by a Universal standard, virtue becomes subjective and relative to the individual.

Self-denial and detachment to achieve Stoic sage-hood becomes entirely circular. Who says you are courageous? Who says you are just? Who says you are wise? You do. There is a piece missing from the equation.

According to many MoSto’s, there is no Providential mind and nothing further after death in this materialist universe. So what’s the point of virtue from this perspective?

Can you achieve ataraxia and aponia from self-derived virtue and mental detachment?

I would say no.

In an entirely non-providential universe, the Epicureans have it right. If there is no deity and no afterlife, then seeking pleasure would be highest good, because nothing else exists in its place. Modern Stoics, according to their own world view, are wasting time not seeking after pleasure as the highest good. They delude themselves by believing virtue has worth. But in reality virtue without providence is utterly worthless.