

# An August 2018 Example of the Ascetic View of Epicurus

Post by "Cassius" of August 19, 2018 at 9:40 AM

Someone asked about the Cyreniacs and my view is:

Diogenes Laertius thought this was the most significant difference, which sounds likely. Key points are that Epicurus endorses BOTH pleasures of the mind and those of the body, which the Cyreniacs only endorsed those of the body, and Epicurus held that pleasures of the mind can be greater than those of the body, while the Cyreniacs apparently held a different view: "Such are his {Epicurus'} views on life and conduct; and he has discoursed upon them at greater length elsewhere. 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."

<http://www.epicurus.net/en/lives.html#F>

I can see room for reasonable discussion between Cyreniacs and Epicureans as to which pleasures are more intense, as I think that is going to differ with individual context - at least our choices among them will. I can also see reasonable argument about the meaning of pleasures at "rest" for reasons we have discussed many times - any discussion of that turns on definitions of what pleasures of "rest" really are, and from the point of view of life being dynamic and ever-changing, nothing is really "at rest." But these are issues among friends who see the bigger and deeper points - that there are no religious gods or ideal forms of conventional philosophy which tell us what pleasure is, or that we should pursue something other than pleasure.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/509-an-august-2018-example-of-the-ascetic-view-of-epicurus/?postID=1359#post1359>