

Episode 267 - Virtue Is Not Absolute Or An End In Itself - All Good And Evil Consists In Sensation.

Post by "Cassius" of January 26, 2025 at 4:52 PM

Additional from Marcus Aurelius, Diogenes Laertius Book VII (on Zeno of Citium), and Seneca:

Marcus Aurelius, Book IV: 16. Within ten days thou wilt seem a god to those to whom thou art now a beast and an ape, if thou wilt return to thy principles and the worship of reason.

Marcus Aurelius, Book I: 8. From Apollonius I learned freedom of will and undeviating steadiness of purpose; and to look to nothing else, not even for a moment, except to reason....

Marcus Aurelius - In the constitution of the rational animal I see no virtue which is opposed to justice; but I see a virtue which is opposed to love of pleasure, and that is temperance.

Diogenes Laertius, Life of Zeno: 100. The reason why they characterize the perfect good as beautiful is that it has in full all the "factors" required by nature or has perfect proportion. Of the beautiful there are (say they) four species, namely, what is just, courageous, orderly and wise; for it is under these forms that fair deeds are accomplished. Similarly there are four species of the base or ugly, namely, what is unjust, cowardly, disorderly, and unwise. By the beautiful is meant properly and in an unique sense that good which renders its possessors praiseworthy, or briefly, good which is worthy of praise; though in another sense it signifies a good aptitude for one's proper function; while in yet another sense the beautiful is that which lends new grace to anything, as when we say of the wise man that he alone is good and beautiful. 101. And they say that only the morally beautiful is good. So Hecato in his treatise On Goods, book iii., and Chrysippus in his work On the Morally Beautiful. They hold, that is, that virtue and whatever partakes of virtue consists in this: which is equivalent to saying that all that is good is beautiful, or that the term "good" has equal force with the term "beautiful," which comes to the same thing. "Since a thing is good, it is beautiful; now it is beautiful, therefore it is good." They hold that all goods are equal and that all good is desirable in the highest degree and admits of no lowering or heightening of intensity. Of things that are, some, they say, are good, some are evil, and some neither good nor evil (that is, morally indifferent).

And Athenaeus the epigrammatist speaks of all the Stoics in common as follows:[22] O ye who've learnt the doctrines of the Porch And have committed to your books divine The best of human learning, teaching men That the mind's virtue is the only good! She only it is who keeps the lives of men And cities, - safer than high gates and walls. But those who place their happiness in pleasure Are led by the least worthy of the Muses. Diogenes Laertius Book VII

Goods comprise the virtues of prudence, justice, courage, temperance, and the rest; while the opposites of these are evils, namely, folly, injustice, and the rest. Neutral (neither good nor evil,

that is) are all those things which neither benefit nor harm a man: such as life, health, pleasure, beauty, strength, wealth, fair fame and noble birth, and their opposites, death, disease, pain, ugliness, weakness, poverty, ignominy, low birth, and the like. Diogenes Laertius Book VII

Pleasure is an irrational elation at the accruing of what seems to be choiceworthy; and under it are ranged ravishment, malevolent joy, delight, transport. Ravishment is pleasure which charms the ear. Malevolent joy is pleasure at another's ills. Delight is the mind's propulsion to weakness, its name in Greek (τέρψις) being akin to τρέψις or turning. To be in transports of delight is the melting away of virtue. Diogenes Laertius Book VII

"And yet what reason is there that he should provide a living? For if it be to support life, life itself is after all a thing indifferent. If it be for pleasure, pleasure too is a thing indifferent. While if it be for virtue, virtue in itself is sufficient to constitute happiness. Diogenes Laertius Book VII

Seneca's Letters - To Lucilius - 66.45: "What can be added to that which is perfect? Nothing otherwise that was not perfect to which something has been added. Nor can anything be added to virtue, either, for if anything can be added thereto, it must have contained a defect. Honour, also, permits of no addition; for it is honourable because of the very qualities which I have mentioned.[5] What then? Do you think that propriety, justice, lawfulness, do not also belong to the same type, and that they are kept within fixed limits? The ability to increase is proof that a thing is still imperfect.