

## **Stoic Ethics**

Happiness in the sense of Well-being is obtained only by living in accordance with God's universal law (the *logos*). This is the same as living in accordance with Nature.

One should further the purposes of Destiny in those things that depend on us but we should submit and assent to those parts of Destiny that do not depend on us.

Wisdom consists of knowing the plan of Destiny. We do what is right just to the extent that we have a rational understanding of things.

Only ignorance causes wickedness. Those things that are commonly considered evil are not really evil because they are not things that can prevent us from having a wise and happy state of mind by means of achieving mental tranquility. Such a condition is possible even for those who are poor, lame, blind or ill.

The epicureans are wrong to place the highest value on pleasures. If they were right, one could not obtain happiness or contentment without a constant supply of them. But there are many examples of people who are satisfied with their lives even though they live frugally and mainly serve the needs of others.

Duty is what matters most. Our main duty is toward others.

The well-being of humanity matters far more than one's own well-being. The tendency to selfishness needs to be eradicated because it is contrary to the plan of destiny.

Only virtue is intrinsically good. Virtue enables one to eradicate irrational passions and emotions, thus achieving *apathia*.

Irrational passions include longing for things that are indifferent as if they were great goods that we could not be happy without.

Early Stoics thought the categories of “wise” and “foolish” were absolutely exclusive. So, if one has not fully achieved the state of wisdom, one is a fool, no different from any other fool. The change from foolishness to wisdom had to be instantaneous because it could happen gradually.

Later Stoics developed the category of “proficient” to describe those who have not yet achieved wisdom but who are making progress toward it.

Also, they developed the category of “preferred” to describe things that are indifferent but which are in accordance with nature; i.e., things that are not essential to well-being but which may enhance it (e.g., health, strength or pleasure)