

Stoics

Sources

- Stoa - steps.
- We have Zeno, Chrysippus, and Cleanthes. Little survived.
- Later Roman Stoics, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius (emperor)
- Critics of Stoics---especially later like Cicero and Sextus.

Physics

The Stoics think that the universe consists of two principles.

- God. Immanent in whole of nature and directs its development down to the smallest detail. It is the active principle. It is associated with reason or intelligent designing fire which structures matter in accordance with its plan. (Formal, final, efficient cause)
- Matter is utterly unqualified and inert. It is what is acted upon.
- Eternal Recurrence: it is enacted over and over. Fire leads to elements lead to work and leads back to fire.
- Note that God does not craft the world from outside. Activity in the universe is the activity of God.

Soul

- Note that they have a materialistic conception of the soul.
- Monistic conception like Plato. Reason just assents or does not assent.
- They think that all impulses and desires are movements of the soul towards something.
- You have an impression that X is good and you assent to that impression. Only then do you have a desire, action.
- All our desires are under our control
- Compare this to someone who says I desire X then I decide whether X is good or bad. Stoics think that all desire includes a decision that x is good.

Ethics

- whatever is good must benefit possessor under all circumstances. Being healthy doesn't cut it.
- The goal, end of living: live in accordance with nature, live in accordance with experience of what happens by nature.
- only goods are the characteristic excellences of human minds--prudence, wisdom, justice, courage and so on.
- Exercise of virtues is necessary and sufficient for happiness.
- They say that some things which value but which are not good. Health and wealth are to be preferred because they are typically appropriate--fitting for us.
- So whole universe is God. each part is naturally constituted so that it seeks what is appropriate or suitable to it, just as our own body parts are so constituted as to preserve both themselves and the whole of which they are parts.
- We have natural impulse for preservations---so aim for preservation. food and warmth. Since we are rational, people are appropriate to us. Perfection of our rational natures.
- It's about the rational choice of indifferents. You are happy if you are selecting rationally---you don't need to obtain them.
- emotions are excesses that prevent us rationally selecting what we should. But we can have impulses.