



## Epicurus and the Cyrenaics on Pleasure

Diogenes Laertius

XXVIII. Now, [Epicurus] differs with the Cyrenaics about pleasure. For they do not admit that to pleasure can exist as a state, but place it wholly in motion. He, however, admits both kinds to be pleasure, namely, that of the soul, and that of the body, as he says in his treatise on Choice and Avoidance; and also in his work on the Chief Good; and in the first book of his treatise on Lives, and in his Letter against the Mitylenian Philosophers. And in the same spirit, Diogenes...speaks thus. "But when pleasure is understood, I mean both that which exists in motion, and that which is a state . . . ." And Epicurus, in his treatise on Choice, speaks thus: "Now, freedom from disquietude, and freedom from pain, are states of pleasure; but joy and cheerfulness are beheld in motion and energy."

XXIX. For [the Cyrenaics] make out the pains of the body to be worse than those of the mind; accordingly, those who do wrong, are punished in the body. But [Epicurus] considers the pains of the soul the worst; for that the flesh is only sensible to present affliction, but the soul feels the past, the present, and the future. Therefore, in the same manner, he contends that the pleasure of the soul are greater than those of the body; and he uses as proof that pleasure is the chief good, the fact that all animals from the moment of their birth are delighted with pleasure, and are offended with pain by their natural instinct, and without the employment of Reason. Therefore, too we, of our own inclinations, flee from pain....

XXX. And we choose the virtues for the sake of pleasure, and not on their own account; just as we seek the skill of the physician for the sake of health, as Diogenes says, in the twentieth book of his Select Discourses, where he also calls virtue alone inseparable from pleasure, but that every thing else may be separated from it as mortal.

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Diogenes Laertius. *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* 10.28.30. Trans. C.D. Yonge. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926.

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