

VIRTUOUS LIFE AND HAPPINESS
IN EPICTETUS, SOCRATES AND STOICISM

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

HÜLYA KAHVECİ

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

MAY 2015

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof.Dr. Meliha Altunışık
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil Turan
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil Turan
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ertuğrul R. Turan (Ankara U., Phil.) _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman (METU, Phil.) _____

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil Turan (METU, Phil.) _____

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ABSTRACT

VIRTUOUS LIFE AND HAPPINESS IN EPICTETUS, SOCRATES & STOICISM

Kahveci, Hülya
M.A., Department of Philosophy
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ş.Halil Turan

May 2015, 107 pages

In this M.A. thesis, Epictetus' philosophy about virtuous life and happiness will be investigated. His philosophy is shaped by the thoughts of Socrates and Stoicism, therefore, before his main thoughts Socrates' and Stoic's philosophy under the scope of happiness will be analyzed. Firstly, the focus will be on Socrates' philosophy of happiness, but before that, in order to pull the reader out of the blurry thoughts about historical Socrates and Platonic Socrates dilemma, I will try to prove that Socrates has basic ideas on happiness benefitting from different dialogues and writers. Then, with the Stoic views, the acceptance about passion and pleasures are the blockage of virtue actions will be presented. Finally, I will scrutinize the teachings of Epictetus which will show to the reader that a life which is subjected to passion and pleasures cannot be labeled as happiness.

Keywords: Happiness, virtue, freedom, passion, pleasures.

ÖZ

EPIKTETOS, SOKRATES VE STOA'DA ERDEMLİ YAŞAM VE MUTLULUK

Kahveci, Hülya
Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil Turan

Mayıs 2015, 107 sayfa

Bu Yüksek Lisans tezinde, Epiktetos'un erdemli yaşam ve mutluluk felsefesi anlatılacaktır. Epiktetos'un felsefesini incelemeden önce, onun fikirlerinin ve felsefesinin temelini oluşturan Sokrates ve Stoacılık tanıtılacaktır. Sokratesin mutluluk ile ilgili felsefesinden bahsetmeden önce, okuyucuyu tarihi Sokrates ve Platocu Sokrates belirsizliğinden çıkarmak adına, farklı diyalog ve yazarlardan faydalanarak, Sokrates'in mutluluk ve erdemli yaşam ile ilgili temelde aynı düşüncelere sahip olduğunu kanıtlamaya çalışacağım. Ardından Stoacı düşünceyle birlikte, haz ve tutkuların ahlak ve mutluluğu engellediğinin kabulünü ortaya koyup, Epiktetos'un haz ve tutkulara tabi bir hayatla mutluluğun mümkün olmadığını anlatan öğretilerini inceleyeceğim.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mutluluk, erdem, özgürlük, tutku, hazlar.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was performed under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil Turan. I would like to express my gratitude for his support and guidance. I also thank Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman and Assist. Prof. Dr. Ertuğrul Rufayi Turan for their suggestions and valuable comments on this research.

Thank you Mom, Hürrem Sultan, I am the luckiest human being for being your little one. Like in the last conversation of ours, I love you, five times.

Thank you Dad, Beşiktaşlı Ustura Necati, you are the role model of this research, history can label you as another sage-men with no doubts at all.

Thank you my sisters for being there for me and supporting me all the time.

Thank you all my teachers and friends for the beauty of your soul and the sincerity of your smile.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The meaning and usage of happiness in modern times differs from the ancient one. People in modern societies hold an understanding of happiness that represents a materialistic view. For modern people, an individual's degree of happiness is defined by the assets that the person has or by the power that she or he holds in society. A closer inquiry reveals an abundance of examples that demonstrate how pervasive this conception of happiness is. For example, when evaluating the happiness of a mature woman or man, one factor frequently taken into consideration is success or failure in marrying and starting a family. Likewise, when an undergraduate student's understanding of happiness is scrutinized, likely answers involve graduating successfully, getting a job with a perfect salary after college, and increasing one's standard of living by acquiring more and more material assets. In addition to defining happiness in terms of material things and social position, modern people also conceive of happiness as a temporary state. Both of these views on happiness are shaped by a materialistic perspective, one that is radically criticized by the ancient Greek philosophers.

The ancient Greek philosophers regard happiness with different attitudes and ideas. First of all, they hold that *eudaimonia*—a key term that refers to happiness with relation to the virtues and the fulfillment of human nature—can be achieved only over a complete lifetime. Ancient philosophers share three main ideas regarding *eudaimonia*:

that it results from virtuous actions; that these actions must be integrated with rational principles; and that they must be carried out not only for one's inward state but also for the sake of society. In Greek thought, the term virtue corresponds to *arête*, which also includes the idea of excellence. Virtuous actions are not guided by or dependent on pleasures and passions. Thus pleasures and passions cannot lead human souls to moral acts. Since virtue is a requirement for happiness, Ancient Greek philosophers takes a stand against pleasures and passions. In this thesis, I will investigate the way in which Ancient Greek philosophers exclude pleasures and passions from a conception of happiness that depends on virtuous action. For this purpose, I will focus on the philosophies of Socrates, the Stoics, and Epictetus. I will show that there is continuity in their thoughts and attitudes regarding happiness. In particular, this investigation will demonstrate how Epictetus, as a didactic teacher and philosopher, takes Socratic and Stoic teachings as a starting point for his ideas.

A background in Socratic philosophy and Stoicism are essential for understanding Epictetus's teachings. Epictetus acknowledges that he is a follower of Socratic teachings and that he shares idea with Socrates about happiness and its requirements. In fact, Epictetus can be thought of as a "life coach," offering instruction in achieving happiness. His teachings not only point out mistaken ideas about happiness, but also give concrete examples of how happiness can be achieved. He reminds us that we are pieces of the divine endowed with rationality. We are born free and nothing can ever lastingly chain our precious souls. For him, the problem of the passions and pleasures lies in the fact that they are the chains of the soul. They act as barriers to our reasoning that must accompany in every step that we take. To achieve happiness, we should not be the slaves either of persons or of pleasures.

In the Stoic view, external impressions are the source of pleasures. When one makes judgments and forms desires based on external impressions, the problem arises. By nature, human beings are rational; they may have similarities with animals but they

also have the ability to think, to judge, to evaluate, and to question. For Epictetus, as for the Stoics, the road to happiness consists in not letting ourselves be dependent on passions, and in acting in accordance with our nature. This means following the guidance of reason rather than passions and pleasures. Happiness relies on this inward orientation toward reason, and so one should never whine about what one could have, would have or should have. Thus, what nature gave us from birth it is already enough—being rational, having freedom, and having innate knowledge of goodness and evil. Knowing what is good and what is evil will lead one's soul to the virtuous actions. However; just having this kind of knowledge will not be sufficient; there has to be action corresponding to this knowledge. Happiness consists in training, exercising and making a habit of these virtuous acts; and this can only be achieved by being on guard against pleasures and the passions, which find their source in external impressions.

In the following chapter, I will investigate Socrates as the pioneer of the search for happiness in the Ancient Greek philosophical tradition. Socrates declares that happiness is possible if human beings make the effort to achieve it. For Socrates, virtue is linked to happiness—without virtuous actions, happiness is impossible; and virtuous acts require the control of the pleasures and passions. In order to understand the Socratic approach to pleasures, a distinction between the historical and the Platonic Socrates has to be made, and I will discuss this difference in the upcoming chapter. In order to examine Socrates' thoughts and teachings in depth, selections from the dialogues of Xenophon, Libanius, Plato and Aristophanes will be discussed. In the third chapter, the Socratic approach to pleasures within Plato's dialogues will be scrutinized, in order to reveal the basis for Epictetus' philosophy. In addition, I will introduce Stoic philosophy and its relevance to Epictetus in the third chapter. In the fourth chapter, Stoicism and its basic teachings will be elaborated further in order to give more information about the structure of Epictetus' philosophy. In the fifth chapter, the *Discourses* and *Enchiridion* of Epictetus will be examined in order to

articulate his ideas about happiness. I will offer answers to the questions ‘What is happiness?’, ‘What prevents happiness?’, ‘Is it possible to be happy?’, ‘How can one achieve happiness?’, and ‘What makes freedom so important in Epictetus’ moralist philosophy?’ In the example of Epictetus, who was once sold as a slave, we will see the possibility of a free and virtuous life.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL SOCRATES VS. THE PLATONIC SOCRATES

Socrates is one of the major philosophers of Ancient Greece, and has a great and lasting impact on ancient and modern Western philosophy. His thoughts about the life and his way of communicating these thoughts opened new directions for philosophy. Firstly, he uses *elenchus*—meaning “examination” or “test”—¹ in his dialogues, which emphasizes the importance of logic in philosophical discussions. His other major role in philosophy lies in introducing the investigation into the nature of knowledge, namely epistemology. However, in literature there are two distinct figures of Socrates, termed the historical Socrates and the Platonic Socrates, because knowledge about Socrates and Socratic thought derives from two different types of sources. In order to clarify this confusion about Socrates, I will first present common views about Socrates drawn from different dialogues, and then I will try to show his differences from Plato—and from Plato’s conception of him.

2.1 Characterization of Socrates

Before turning to his philosophy, it is relevant to take a look at his character by forming an image of Socrates from dialogues written by different philosophers. Libanus, in his *Apology of Socrates*, talks about Socrates’ lifestyle. According to him, Socrates is not a person who can be regarded as caring at all for possessions. He says

¹ *elenchus* is coming from the word of *elenchein* which also means examine, shame or refute.

that when Socrates lost his father's inheritance, he accepted the fact, and it did not change who he was:

For instead of seeking easy but dishonest means and considering where he might obtain money to replace what was lost, he gave up extravagance and taught himself not to need so much rather than search for the means to continue spending extravagantly: wearing a single threadbare cloak throughout the year, drinking water more gladly than others drink wine from Thasos, and preferring just to eat when hungry instead of Persian feast.²

From Libanius' words, one can deduce that Socrates is a modest man and does not arrange his life according to possessions that he has or had. Moreover, he is a self-controlled person with regard to his daily needs. Libanius points out Socrates' self-controlled side, in the dialogue of *Gorgias* (507c); being self-controlled is presented as a method of happiness. While Gorgias and Socrates are talking about happiness, Socrates claims that one should not allow oneself to be led by passions. One should not totally act upon desires; rather, one must control oneself as the key of a happy life. In Libanius' version, Socrates states:

...who desires to be happy must ensue and practice temperance, and flee from licentiousness, each of us as fast as his feet will carry him, and must contrive, if possible, to need no correction; but if he have need of it, either himself or anyone belonging to him, either an individual or a city, then right must be applied and they must be corrected, if they are to be happy. This, in my opinion, is the mark on which a man should fix his eyes throughout life; he should concentrate all his own and his city's efforts on this one business of providing a man who would be blessed with the needful justice and temperance; not letting one's desires go unrestrained and in one's attempts to satisfy them—an interminable trouble—leading the life of a robber.³

² Calder, William M. *The Unknown Socrates: Translations, with introductions and notes, of four important documents in the late antique reception of Socrates the Athenian*. Wauconda, Ill.: Bolchazy Carducci Publishers, 2002. 17-18, p. 53.

³ Plato (1925, 2001). *Lysis; Symposium; Gorgias* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 507d-e, p. 469.

The same characterization of Socrates is drawn by Xenophon also. In the *Symposium* of Xenophon, Socrates, Callias and Antisthenes are talking about wealth, and Socrates asks Antisthenes to explain wealth on his behalf. While he explains his understanding of wealth, he says that his thoughts about wealth have been acquired from Socrates, and he attributes his attitudes on the subject to Socrates.⁴ Antisthenes gives examples, such as people who already own a great deal of property and yet cannot be satisfied without other possessions. He claims that he has been witness to people who steal money or kill other people for money. Moreover, he says with an open heart that he pities them and explains thoughts about wealth:

For my own part, my possessions are so great that I can hardly find them myself; yet I have enough so that I can eat until I reach a point where I no longer feel hungry and drink until I do not feel thirsty... But the most valuable parcel of my wealth I reckon to be this, that even though someone were to rob me of what I now possess, I see no occupation so humble that it would not give me adequate fare. For whenever I feel an inclination to indulge my appetite, I do not buy fancy articles at the market, Bu I draw on the store-house of my soul.⁵

The last sentence of Antisthenes' points the idea of the primary importance of the soul. Caring about the soul and being indifferent to bodily needs is another significant aspect of Socrates' thought. In his way of life, possessions, money, and clothes are not in the scope of his attention. His concern is entirely about his soul, in which he believes the can find the beautiful and the good. In Xenophon's *Symposium*⁶, when Socrates, Callias, Hermogenes and Anthistenes are talking about love, Socrates brings up Aphrodite and her two-sided love: Vulgar and Heavenly. He entitles Vulgar love as 'carnal love' and opposes it to Heavenly love, which is described as 'spiritual love'. Socrates admits that the love of soul is more important than the love of the carnal. He

⁴ Xenophon (1923, 1997). *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium and Apology* (E.C. Marchant & O.J. Todd, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book IV, 34-43, p. 581.

⁵ *ibid*, p. 585.

⁶ *ibid*, pp. 615-619.

explains that physical love is temporary, in contrast to spiritual love which is eternal and enduring. Youth and its shining will eventually end at some point of life; but the soul's beauty does diminish with the passage of time; on the contrary, it becomes more beautiful. Not only Xenophon, but also Libanius stresses that Socrates shows us how we can release our souls—our main possessions apart from our bodily possessions—from the absence of good by means of philosophy.⁷

For the body is a source of endless trouble to us by reason of the mere requirement of food and is liable also to diseases which overtake and impede us in the search of true being... It has been proved to us by experience that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we must be quit of the body – the soul in herself must behold things in themselves: and then we shall attain the wisdom which we desire... for if while in company with the body, the soul cannot have pure knowledge.⁸

In Plato's *Phaedo*, discussing the topic of knowledge and how pure knowledge can be gained, Socrates claims that pure knowledge is attainable just by caring for our souls and avoiding being led by bodily needs. Thus it is clear that taking care of the soul plays an important role in both Socrates' lifestyle and in his philosophy.

2.2 The main themes in the dialogues

From all these quotations about Socrates, it can be seen that he is a self-controlled person. He does not pay any more attention than is required to his bodily needs and puts the needs of his soul before those of his body. When he is trying to explain happiness, the dialogues are composed of questions and answers because for him if one does not *examine* one's self, one's life will be meaningless.⁹ By knowing one's

⁷ Calder, William M. *The Unknown Socrates: Translations, with introductions and notes, of four important documents in the late antique reception of Socrates the Athenian*. Wauconda, Ill.: Bolchazy Carducci Publishers, 2002. p.52.

⁸ Plato (1914, 2001). *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus* (H. N. Fowler, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, pp. 6-7.

⁹ In Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (Book IV 2.24, p. 287.) the statement of 'know thyself' and Plato, *Apology* (38) 'unexamined life is not worth living'.

self, he believes that a person can grasp the nature of knowledge and thus know what is good and what is evil. Conducting one's self in accord with the knowledge of good and evil—in other words, exhibiting virtue—through self-consistency is his answer to the problem of how to achieve happiness, both in his life and his philosophy. With his interlocutors, he is always trying to seek knowledge about ethics. Using *elenchus* in this investigation is a necessity here, because he seeks to dispel ideas that are not in accord with logical or rational thought, and by this method he draws closer to the true knowledge that they are looking for. With his companions he is sure that they can achieve this outcome, because for him, as Xenophon stated in *Memorabilia* (book 5-6) "... if a man knew anything, he could give an account of it to others."

Regarding the issue of the differences in Socrates' thought in different dialogues, the main explanation is well-known: all we know about Socrates depends on two sets of sources. In addition to that, when Plato's writings are examined, it is an indisputable fact that Socrates' thoughts change in the course of the dialogues. I will try to explain at what point one can consider Socrates as historical or Platonic by looking at the issues which are discussed and explaining his method and its special characteristics.

When Libanius is explaining Socrates' philosophy in the *Apology of Socrates*, he states that before Socrates, the philosophers dealt with questions about the nature of the heavens. Their minds were oriented toward the manner of the workings of the moon, the reasons for various natural phenomena, and so on. According to Libanius, Socrates believes that the knowledge which comes out from these topics is not meaningful. In his mode of philosophy, all questions must engage with the condition of the humankind: "... the pursuit of 'justice', and the questions of who must be considered 'courageous', who may be appropriately called 'wise', and what is the greatest good for family, city, and all nations- these are the issues he tackled... providing a life for himself in the investigation along with his associates into the

nature of every matter.”¹⁰ Socrates, unlike the other philosophers of his time, chose to investigate the questions that related to humankind’s nature as Libanius claimed. In the *Symposium* of Xenophon, Socrates and his companions are talking about wealth, friends, poverty and beauty; in the *Memorabilia* (especially in book 5), the importance of being self-controlled is discussed. These topics are all related to human nature, and the dialogues are conducted for the purpose of achieving a good life. Thus the primary motive behind Socrates’ dialogues is happiness. Socrates asks these kinds of questions because he wants to identify what a good life is, and how it can be made possible. Every single individual wants to live a good life, and thus happiness and its components are the sole relevant facts of human existence. The good life, for Socrates, is a path of being virtuous. In order to be virtuous one has to know the nature of virtue. By this very specific knowledge, one will be able to know what is right and what is wrong. The Socratic Method arose out of a search for the means of acquiring *arête*. For Socrates, if one knows what is right then one’s actions and decisions will be right; the virtuous life consists in living in this way, which brings happiness. If one has the knowledge of what is good and what is evil and lives according to this knowledge with self-consistency, then one’s life can be defined as a happy life. The knowledge of good and evil is the Socratic virtue with which the main argument of *Protagoras* is concerned. However, merely knowing the good and the evil will not ensure a happy life. It is only by being virtuous, and also acting with self-consistency, that happiness can be achieved.

On the topic of virtue, Socrates makes the claim that it has four parts: courage, temperance, justice and piety. In Plato’s early dialogues, these parts are discussed by Socrates and his interlocutors. For example: they seek to define courage in *Laches*, temperance in *Charmides*, piety in *Euthyphro*, and in *the Republic* the meaning of

¹⁰ Calder, William M. *The Unknown Socrates: Translations, with introductions and notes, of four important documents in the late antique reception of Socrates the Athenian*. Wauconda, Ill.: Bolchazy Carducci Publishers, 2002. p. 26.

justice is interrogated. In each case, the problem lies in the difficulty of pinning down the nature of virtue and its component parts—courage, temperance, justice and piety. At this point the Socratic Method *elenchus* shows itself. When discussing ethics, one cannot determine ethical concepts' truth or falsity just by adhering to their definitions. Instead, by asking questions, or by subjecting concepts to a test or examination, one can arrive at logical steps; and through these steps counter examples arise in the dialogues. By examining these concepts in the new light shed by the questions asked and answers given, Socrates arrives at necessary logical consequences. In this repeated process, more logical results are reached and built upon in order to arrive finally at the nature of knowledge. In other words, examining beliefs, asking about their nature and about what they really are, will get us closer to the point of their rightness. If the interlocutor's answers are out of the logical frame, the questions, which are asked by Socrates, are put forward in new guise, while returning again to the definitions.¹¹ This process continues with the aim of eliminating inconsistencies of moral belief which support and strengthen the argument. In order to know what is good and evil requires this kind of aim and need in the Socratic dialogues. According to Hope May, the answers of ethical questions, especially when they are about moral beliefs, are totally separate from the type of statements that one verify by means of a resource such as an encyclopedia. She claims that, with this logical technique, moral beliefs can be liberated from their own inconsistencies. In her words: "... Socrates elicits a number of different claims from his interlocutor, unpacks them (i.e., pulls out their logical consequences), and then shows that they are inconsistent with one another... In other words, Socrates used *elenchus* to reveal that human beings have inconsistent beliefs."¹²

¹¹ Calder, William M. *The Unknown Socrates: Translations, with introductions and notes, of four important documents in the late antique reception of Socrates the Athenian*. Wauconda, Ill.: Bolchazy Carducci Publishers, 2002. Book IV-6.12-15, pp. 343-347.

¹² Hope, May. *On Socrates*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2000. pp. 63-70.

Another significant aspect of Socratic Method, elenchus, is the state of being aporetic, meaning the dialogues are full of doubts. As a matter of fact, Socrates—who claims that he is ignorant being-, does not try to find the realms of the things, concepts, or beliefs. His aim is trying to find nature of things so that one can be able to know what is good and what is evil. However, all one can draw conclusions about from the dialogues are the inconsistencies present in moral beliefs, and the possibility of eliminating such inconsistencies. Socrates uses elenchus for this investigation, and tries to get closer the nature of good and evil. At this point, Hugh H. Benson has stated that the method here ensures the withdrawal of the false beliefs.¹³ In the dialogues, Socrates never does show his interlocutor any exact definitions of virtue. In fact, he refers to himself as an ignorant being in many dialogues, as pointed out by Laertius¹⁴ and evident in the *Charmmides* of Plato (162 b). Moreover, in the early dialogues of Plato, Socrates does not try to refute his interlocutor's answers; his aim is rather to strengthen the argument as it is stated earlier. He is trying to show them that they do not know what they think they know; and he always talks about himself as if he is not inferior to their knowledge and also he is ignorant of the topic which they are talking about. In conversing with such a person, one cannot wait for him to give exact answers, and the doubts that fill the dialogues are only natural. One cannot save one's self from doubts that the dialogue creates; the more ways in which Socrates poses questions, the more the aporetic side of the dialogue can be grasped. Being aporetic is thus a characteristic feature of his philosophy.

In the *Alcibiades I*, however, Alcibiades represents a character who confirms Socrates' claims made in other dialogues¹⁵. Furthermore, in *the Republic*, the

¹³ Benson, Hugh H. “ ‘Meno’, the Slave Boy and the Elenchos.” *Phronesis*. 35.2 (1990): pp. 129-130.

¹⁴ Laertius, Diogenes (1925). *Lives of eminent philosophers* (R.D. Hicks, Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953. 2.32, p.163.

¹⁵ This character in *Alcibiades 1* will be explained in Chapter 2 more elaborately, pp. 29-31.

significant role of the doubts give place to confirmation of Socrates' claims, and the interlocutor in the dialogue becomes a yes-man. In earlier dialogues, when there is an objection or refutation offered to Socrates' claims, Socrates steps backwards and diversifies the conversation with other examples; he raises further questions in order to create a broader field for the dialogue. However, in *the Republic*, especially in Book 1, even if the names of the debaters are not given, one can easily guess which Socrates is and who the interlocutors are, because their parts consist mostly in such responses to Socrates as "Yes" and "You are quite right." The identification of Socratic Method was being full of doubts, yet now the dialogue is about confirmation of Socrates' questions and suggestions. At this point, *The Republic* does not seem to reflect the historical Socrates. The Socrates character in *The Republic* can thus be identified as the Platonic Socrates.

Socrates continues with his philosophy by claiming that inconsistencies in moral beliefs are related to being ignorant, and that since the knowledge of virtue can be gained by *recalling*, as he claimed in *Menon*, happiness is still achievable. However, Robert C. Bartlett states that, in Xenophon's writings, Socrates does not seem to admit that virtue is teachable. Bartlett focuses on the *Symposium* dialogue where a girl acrobatic dancer performs her acts with high-level skill.¹⁶ Socrates allows that man's and woman's nature may not be equal, but adds that "Witnesses of this feat, surely, will never again deny, I feel sure, that courage, like other things, admits of being taught, when this girl, in spite of her sex, leaps so boldly in among the swords!"¹⁷ The words of 'courage, like other things' gives the sense that Socrates acknowledges the impartibility of virtue. Regarding these ambivalent answers about virtue, Bartlett

¹⁶ Xenophon (2006). *The shorter Socratic writings: "Apology of Socrates to the jury," "Oeconomicus," and "Symposium"* (R.C. Bartlett, Trans.). Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press. p. 178.

¹⁷ Xenophon (1923, 1997). *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium and Apology* (E.C. Marchant & O.J. Todd, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book II.8-12, pp. 547-549.

proposes the *partial* impartibility of virtue. While skills can be taught as a set of practices, virtue cannot be imparted simply by teaching ways in which it is applied in practice. Aside from practices, he claims that the question of the impartibility of virtue is made possible by logos (reason); however, he does not resolve the issue in this dialogue, and he concludes: “The question of the teachability and hence of the rationality of virtue is of concern to Socrates. It seems clear too that, even if virtue is itself teachable, it does not follow that all can be taught it.”¹⁸

Even if the *Protagoras* did not answer the question of whether virtue is teachable or not, the other dialogues prove its impartibility. In *Alcibiades I*, Socrates opines that the teacher role with respect to virtue is invalid. The dialogue points out the importance of the soul in understanding virtue. All our actions such loving, talking and especially knowing have strong connections to the soul.¹⁹ For him, human beings do not learn virtue; they just look into their souls where the virtue is hidden. In *Meno*, the recalling of knowledge, which is in the soul, is proved by a case in which a slave who is not educated in geometry solves a geometry problem. Even if these dialogues seem to reflect the Platonic Socrates in terms of their literary character, the character of Socrates in them is completely different. In fact, the idea of recalling and remembering knowledge through the soul has its roots in the earlier dialogues, which have been established as depicting the historic Socrates.

For Socrates, as is evident both in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* (4. 6.1) and Plato’s *Laches* (190 c), if a human being has knowledge about something, then that person is capable of transferring that knowledge to other people. In other words, one can teach other people if he or she has the knowledge. In order to clarify this attitude of Socrates, the *Oeconomicus* of Xenophon provides a good example. In the dialogue,

¹⁸ Xenophon (2006). *The shorter Socratic writings: "Apology of Socrates to the jury," "Oeconomicus," and "Symposium"* (R.C. Bartlett, Trans.). Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press. pp. 178-179.

¹⁹ Joose, Albert. “Dialectic and Who We Are in the Alcibiades.” *Phronesis*. 59.1 (2014): p.9.

Ischomachus and Socrates are talking about farming and the knowledge of farming. For Socrates, in order to have fertile farm, the knowledge of farming is not enough; to achieve success in farming one has to have the knowledge about farming.²⁰ Ischomachus rejects the requirement of knowledge of ‘the actual operations of farming’ and claims:

...farming is not troublesome to learn, like other arts, which the pupil must study till he is worn out before he can earn his keep by his work. Some things you can understand by watching men at work, others by just being told, well enough to teach another if you wish. And I believe that you know a good deal about it yourself, without being aware of the fact.²¹

After this statement, Ischomachus rejects another theory about farming: that the essential ingredient of a good and successful farmer knows the nature of soil. According to him, just by making observations one will not only learn the nature of soil but also one will be sure of its nature.²² He picks examples from daily life, e.g. looking at someone’s land, and proves that one can learn about anything just by examining the world that he or she lives in. Socrates admits that he has never been trained about farming and up to their conversation all his action in relation to farming has been to watch farmers.²³ However, what Ischomachus’ way of teaching shows him is that he was just not aware of what he already understood about farming. This dialogue emphasizes the re-collective nature of knowledge; by experiencing life one can have knowledge about the nature of things (concepts, beliefs etc.). At this point, “not being aware of” rather than “not knowing” is the essential verb. Ischomachus makes Socrates realize that he actually knows about farming and about many other

²⁰ Xenophon (1923, 1997). *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium and Apology* (E.C. Marchant & O.J. Todd, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book XV 5-10, p. 481.

²¹ *ibid*, pp. 482-483.

²² *ibid*, p. 485.

²³ *ibid*, p. 501.

things that he claimed to be ignorant of, and Socrates responds by saying: “You lead me by paths of knowledge familiar to me, point out things like what I know, and bring me to think that I really know things that I thought I had no knowledge of.”²⁴

The same process and aim at work in this dialogue are also at work in the *Laches* dialogue of Plato. Discussing courage, Socrates composes his questions by relying on the theme of life; and their answers are driven by observations. Both Socrates and his interlocutor are trying to recollect the knowledge of courage. One may draw conclusions—for example, that a courageous person is one who knows the risks and still proceeds; that a courageous person is not imprudent and his actions have endurance. In addition to this dialogue, the dialogue *Meno* again shows us the recollective aspect of knowledge. In *Meno*, a slave solves a geometry problem despite never having been taught about geometry before, just by following the directions of Socrates. These directions are from the daily life that the slave experiences every day. However, this dialogue differs from the earlier ones and informs us of the fore-existence of knowledge, and that the genuineness of everything in our lives lies in our souls. This claim is put forward more bold and strictly in *Phaedo*. In *Phaedo* (100 b-102 d), Socrates claims that there are eternal truths, namely the Forms, and that there is innate knowledge about them. The Forms make intelligible to us what we perceive through our senses in our world. Every single object in our world conforms to an ideal object, which is the form of the object. All the objects in our world are appearances of an ideal object. The objects in our world including the world itself are participating in the forms, which are eternal, unchangeable and uncreated—in other words, the only true being. They are the eternal truths and we are born with the knowledge of these truths. In other words we have the knowledge of the Forms in our souls, which are

²⁴ Xenophon (1923, 1997). *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium and Apology* (E.C. Marchant & O.J. Todd, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. pp. 507-509.

immortal, and not composite in nature²⁵. In this world, all one can do is to remember or recall this kind of innate knowledge.

In *Phaedo*, Plato shows Socrates' understanding of knowledge in a metaphysical way. However, Xenophon's Socrates differs at this point. His aim is to show the educational side of knowledge. One may not have the knowledge of how to do farming, how to solve a problem, or how to bake a good cake; however, by making observations and examinations, namely by recollecting knowledge, one can still grasp the knowledge of what one believes that one does not know.

Another difference between Xenophon and Plato is that Xenophon's Socrates frequently gives people advice about life; he is constantly making comments about how to live in a better way. For example, he always emphasizes the importance of bodily exercise in *Memorabilia*. He is always giving practical advice about the life, especially when discussing the Good. Xenophon, at the end of *Memorabilia*, summarizes Socrates' life and his dialogues:

All who knew what manner of man Socrates was and who seek after virtue continue to this day to miss him beyond all others, as the chief of helpers in the quest of virtue. For myself, I have described him as he was...so self-controlled that he never chose the pleasanter rather than the better course; so wise that he was unerring in his judgment of the better and the worse, and needed no counsellor, but relied on himself for his knowledge of them; masterly in expounding and defining such things; no less masterly in putting others to the test, and convincing them of error and exhorting them to follow virtue and gentleness. To me then he seemed to be all that a truly good and happy man must be.²⁶

According to William K.C. Guthrie, the utilitarian side of Socrates is seen in Xenophon when Socrates states that "For I think that all men have a choice between

²⁵ Plato (1914, 2001). *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus* (H. N. Fowler, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 102d, pp. 351-353. 107a, p. 369.

²⁶ Xenophon (1923, 1997). *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium and Apology* (E.C. Marchant & O.J. Todd, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book IV, 8-11, pp. 357-359.

various courses, and choose and follow the one which they think conduces most to their advantage.”²⁷ Moreover, Guthrie (p. 143) claims that if the topic is about good, as a Socratic feature, Plato also handles it with a utilitarian aspect. For example, in *Gorgias* (474 d), Socrates proposes that when one considers things as fine, the reason for this judgment lies in the things’ usefulness. Guthrie’s claims about the utilitarianism of Socratic thought are sound. However, there is an important point of difference between Xenophon and Plato. While Xenophon summarizes by saying that Socrates talks about virtue and tries to help people with his advice in a practical way, the Good is the ultimate motivation, and it consists of nothing more than virtue. In the *Memorabilia*²⁸, however, Xenophon admits that Socrates did take lectures about geometry and astronomy, though after this statement he admits to these lectures’ uselessness. In Plato, on the other hand, the perspective on such knowledge of natural philosophy differs in Plato. Jowett, in his translation of Plato’s *Apology*, states that Socrates does not talk about the realm of the cosmos, or in other words about the reality about nature.²⁹ In fact, since Socrates claims his own ignorance and since he is ignorant of natural philosophy in many dialogues, teaching about it would be absurd, since he does not have knowledge of it. In Plato’s *Apology* of Socrates, (19 b- 20c), Socrates’ ignorance about natural philosophy and his refutation of knowledge of nature is expressed in more limited form. In this dialogue, he tries to give an answer to the following accusation: “Socrates is an evil-doer; a meddler who searches into things under the earth and in heaven, and makes the worse appear the better course, and teaches the aforesaid practices to others”³⁰ Socrates rejects being called a teacher

²⁷ Xenophon (1923, 1997). *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium and Apology* (E.C. Marchant & O.J. Todd, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. p. 225.

²⁸ *ibid*, p. 349.

²⁹ Plato (1953). *Dialogues* (B. Jowett, Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953.p. 332.

³⁰ *ibid*, p. 225.

and criticizes Sophists for their teaching, yet they do not know nothing, and they get payment in return for their classes. Xenophon and Plato represent Socrates' view of good as utility and virtue, yet Xenophon adds Socrates' knowledge of natural philosophy while Plato refutes the presence of this philosophy and thought in Socrates.

The other difference between Plato and Xenophon is on the topic of the soul. In the *Symposium* of Xenophon, when the dialogue is about the soul, Socrates talks about nothing but the importance of the soul. He estimates the way which one can preserve the soul by not identifying oneself completely with bodily possessions. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates gives us a characterization of the soul as immortal and non-composite. However, Socrates in *the Republic* states that soul has three parts, namely reason, mettle and desires (impulses).³¹ According to him, transcendental knowledge of the soul satisfies our main goal in life: happiness. This knowledge consists in knowledge of the forms (the form represents true being and ultimate good in Plato's philosophy). By means of the soul's knowledge, immortality and existence beyond our world, one can remember what is good, be virtuous with self-consistency, and thus live a happy life. These two dialogues can be labeled as Platonic Socrates, because the main issues that Socrates discusses in other dialogues are not concerned with descriptive knowledge, and Socrates does not, in other dialogues, deal with virtue in a metaphysical way.

In *the Republic*, after the tripartite nature of the soul is introduced, these parts are also attributed to the *kallipolis* (ideal, best polis). Since people have different talents and different needs, there should be different groups of the city. In the *kallipolis*, everybody should do that to which their talents are best suited. Since Plato is trying to build an *ideal* city, the main motive of this framework, though in some sources it is

³¹ For detailed information see Plato's *Republic* Book 9.

labeled as hierarchical, is *dikaiousunne*³² which would be the condition both of the city as a whole and the individuals in it. Regarding the tripartite society: The *Reason* part of the soul resembles the true guardians, the *Mettle* stands for the guardians, and the *Desires* correspond to the produces. According to this framework, if every single human being does their duty in accordance with nature, meaning every part of the hand wheel runs correctly, the *kallipolis* will be possible and it will be the ideal place in which to live. With regard to Socrates, in any given dialogue, the happy life, the Good, and virtue are all discussed. In his thought the best good life can be lived only by being virtuous. Socrates in *the Republic* makes a similar touch by changing the subject to *kallipolis*. Even *the Republic*'s Socrates seems to be different from the earlier Socrates in Plato. In Xenophon, Socrates describes the function of a good citizen, and this demonstrates that, regardless of just how easily the Platonic Socrates can be seen in this dialogue, he is not completely different from historical Socrates:

‘In financial administration, then, is not the better man he who makes the city wealthier?’ ‘Certainly.’

‘And in war he who makes her stronger than her rivals?’ ‘Of course.’

‘And on an embassy he who turns enemies into friends?’ ‘Presumably.’

‘And in debate he who puts down strife and produces harmony?’ ‘I think so.’³³

Even if we cannot be sure of or give an exact character of Socrates, it is still possible from his similarities in different dialogues form a consistent picture of him. When the differences in Socrates' character show up in in Plato's dialogue, e.g. the soul and the tripartite polis, the idea that the character in question is still Socrates should not be dismissed too quickly. Obviously Plato produces his writings and ideas based on his

³² Dikaiousunne can be understood as justice. However, it has 6 different aspects. (a) Fairness. (b) Appropriateness: in the sense of not desiring of demanding more than you are due. (c) Being fully adjusted to one's social context or environment. (d) [A type of *arete*; *arete* is virtue but in a religious way.] Social 'virtue', it is something that helps to regulate the relations between people in a society. It is not about modesty, bravery, or honesty, because these are regarded as private virtues. (e) It implies sort of law-abiding behavior of individuals or institutions. (f) Doing the right for the right reasons.

³³ Xenophon (1923, 1997). *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium and Apology* (E.C. Marchant & O.J. Todd, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book IV- 6-14, p. 345.

own words and thoughts. The quotation from Xenophon above shows the parts of the *polis* (city), and Socrates here holds up the good members of society as being the best in their areas of expertise, the same categorization offered by Plato for the *kallipolis* in the *Republic*. Guthrie also acknowledges that Plato and historical Socrates are not totally different philosophers as is sometimes thought, and he proves it with an example from Plato's dialogue:

...the idea of the philosopher-kings in the *Republic*, with all the substructure of psychology, epistemology and ontology that supports it, undoubtedly goes beyond anything that Socrates ever said and develops his teaching in ways peculiarly Platonic; but it has its base in the firm conviction of Socrates, which he preached in season and out of season, that politics was no place for the amateur, because government was a *techne* and depended on expert knowledge as much as architecture, shipbuilding, shoemaking, or any other craft.³⁴

A point we should be aware of is that these dialogues of Plato do not completely differ from the historical Socrates. Plato's ideas are rooted in Socrates' claims and attitudes given in other dialogues, as we have seen in examples from Xenophon's writing given above. Robin Waterfield rejects the distinction drawn between historic Socrates and Platonic Socrates in the literature. For him, no one can claim and also prove these imputations about Socrates, and he believes that the only reliable source of knowledge about Socrates is his trial.³⁵ Regarding Socrates' trial, Mario Montuori thinks that Athens did not blame him for nothing. In the *Apology* of Xenophon and Plato, Socrates appears to be a completely innocent human being, yet Montuori thinks that Socrates is portrayed to contrast indictments made against him³⁶ these indictments are narrated by Laertius:

³⁴ Guthrie, W. K. C. (1971). *Socrates*. Great Britain: Cambridge University Press. p.34.

³⁵ Waterfield, R. (January 2009). The Historical Socrates. *History Today*, Volume 59, Issue 1., from <http://www.historytoday.com/robin-waterfield/historical-socrates>. (February, 2014). p. 27-28.

³⁶ Montuori, Mario. *Socrates: an approach*. Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1988. pp. 13-16.

The affidavit in the case, which is still preserved, says Favorinus, in the *Metron*, ran as follows: "This indictment and affidavit is sworn by Meletus, the son of Meletus of Pitthos, against Socrates, the son of Sophroniscus of Alopece: Socrates is guilty of refusing to recognize the gods recognized by the state, and of introducing other new divinities. He is also guilty of corrupting the youth. The penalty demanded is death."³⁷

Montuouri suggests that in order to grasp the real Socrates apart from Plato and Xenophon, we should focus on Aristophanes' *Clouds*. In this piece of comedy, Socrates' character is depicted entirely in keeping with the indictments. In the dialogue between Socrates and Strepsiades, Socrates rejects the existence of Zeus³⁸ and describes Zeus and the other gods as nonsense³⁹. Before these statements Socrates introduces new gods to Strepsiades and says "O Lord and Master, measureless Air, who hold the earth aloft, and you, shining Empyrean, and ye Clouds, awesome goddesses of thunder and lightning, arise, appear aloft, o Mistresses, to the thinker!"⁴⁰

Moreover, in the *Clouds*, Socrates is a trainer who takes money for his teaching, and also a charlatan.⁴¹ In contrast, the Socrates who appears in other sources was an ignorant person and non-sophist in all other dialogues, whether in Xenophon's or Plato's. Montuouri insists on the idea that Plato's works are just fabrications of Socrates, and only Aristophanes' writings bear consideration when the topic is the real Socrates.⁴² However, regardless of whether Socrates refused the existence of Zeus in *Clouds*, he has his own system of living life; he is after the knowledge of good in

³⁷ Laertius, Diogenes (1925). *Lives of eminent philosophers* (R.D. Hicks, Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953. 2.40, p. 171.

³⁸ Aristophanes (1998). *Clouds; Wasps; Peace* (J. Henderson, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 365-370, p. 51.

³⁹ *ibid*, p. 59.

⁴⁰ *ibid*, p. 45.

⁴¹ *ibid*, p. 21. Also between the sections of 1305-1310 of the book, it is claimed by Chorus that Socrates did take money for his teaching.

⁴² Montuori, Mario. *Socrates: an approach*. Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1988. pp. 16-17

order to be virtuous person. He lives his life according to the prescription of happy and good life which he himself formulated. The Athens may have been right about their indictments; but Socrates' discipline and thoughts remain what they are. In Benjamin Jowett's analysis of Plato's *Apology*, he does not accept the idea that Socrates is a sophist; based on his ignorance, the teaching act would be nonsense for him.⁴³ Regarding the charges of evil-doing and of offending the gods by being an atheist, Jowett explains:

He abstains from saying that he believed in the gods whom the approved. Probably he neither wholly believed, nor disbelieved, in the existence of the popular gods; he had no means of knowing about them. But the existence of Apollo or Zeus would have appeared to him both uncertain and unimportant in comparison of the duty of self-examination, and of those principles of truth and right which he deemed to be the foundation of religion.⁴⁴

In this chapter, I have tried to show similarities and differences in the character of Socrates, as he appears in different dialogues. The similarities, we can infer, offer a summary of Socrates' character, the subjects that he focuses on and the method he employs in dialogues. Throughout the dialogues, his speeches are concerned with happiness, which is the ultimate aim for all humanity. For a good and happy life, a person's actions and thoughts must be adjusted in accord with the good, because bad actions and thoughts cannot bring happiness which is good in itself. Virtue will come to a person's aid because it is the knowledge of good and evil. Knowledge, being virtuous, and happy life are inextricably bound together and not divisible from one another. If one follows virtue's light, happy life will be achieved. In this investigation, the problem arises with the topic of pleasures. The element that frustrates and corrupts the soul, and thus happiness, is the pleasures. It is claimed in many dialogues that pleasures are harmful to one's soul and life.

⁴³ Plato (1953). *Dialogues* (B. Jowett, Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953. p. 332.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 338.

We can see in the character of Socrates, as he appears in many different dialogues from different writers, that he is always concerned with being virtuous. The bodily needs are not his focus; rather, the soul is for him the most beloved object. His focus is on the things that will bring the good because being virtuous entails such focus. His method circles around questions and answers because only in this way (dialogues and *elenchus*) – by examining oneself and using reason in every field of life—can the highest good and final goals of our lives be reached. Even though there are discussions regarding two distinct figures of Socrates in history of philosophy, the character that is revealed throughout the different dialogues, and the doctrines regarding happiness that emerge from different dialogues demonstrate that the underlying character of Socrates is the same. His words and thoughts coincide with his actions and lifestyle, and this allows us to identify the historical Socrates even where a “Platonic Socrates” has been proposed. It is a fact that there are some dialogues of Plato where one encounters Plato’s own propositions under the name of Socrates, and this leads to the problem of a two-sided Socrates.

Regarding this problem, there are three points of view. The first view is the developmental attitude which accepts the distinction between these two categories and admits that one can selectively identify the real Socrates from within different dialogues. The other view asserts that even if complete separation of these two categories is impossible, one can still sense a historical Socrates in the dialogues because at the bottom of Plato’s writings the imprint of Socrates’ ideas remains vivid. The third position claims that no one can talk about a real or historical Socrates. With various views having been put forward regarding the historical and Platonic Socrates, some historians and writers try to separate them. According to Guthrie, as mentioned previously,⁴⁵ any total distinction between these two Socrates is impossible. In the *History of Greek Philosophy*, he firstly acknowledges that there are Socratic dialogues

⁴⁵ See p. 21.

and then puts them in order of the historicity of the figure of Socrates in each dialogue: “*Apology, Crito, Euthyphro, Laches, Lysis, Charmides, Hippias Major, Hippias Minor, and Protagoras.*”⁴⁶ Brickhouse and Smith try to spot Socrates’ discrepancies in Plato’s dialogues and then give a list of the early dialogues, meaning genuine Socratic dialogues: “*Apology, Charmides, Crito, Euthydemus, Euthyphro, Gorgias, Hippias Major, Hippias Minor, Ion, Laches, Lysis, Protagoras, Republic Bk. I.*”⁴⁷ A somewhat similar category, termed pre-middle or Socratic dialogues, is represented by Charles Kahn: “*Laches, Charmides, Lysis, Euthyphro, Protagoras, Euthydemus, and Menon.*”⁴⁸ They represent a closely matching picture of which dialogues can be labeled Socratic.

In the next chapter, Socratic approach to pleasures will be examined: *Protagoras, Gorgias, Phaedo, Alcibiades 1, Republic, Philebus and Symposium*. Though only *Protagoras* is labeled as a (genuine) Socratic dialogue, in this text the focus is on the Socratic doctrine. His thoughts about happiness show that pleasures are the causes of life without the good or virtue (i.e. an unhappy life). This doctrine is represented in the thought of other ancient historians or philosophers, and by this fact they can all be regarded as Socratic for the present purpose, because in every dialogue the idea of pleasure, its effects, and its treatment will represent very similar positions to Socrates’ own views.

⁴⁶ Guthrie, William K.C. *A history of Greek philosophy*. Cambridge, University Press, 1962. Book 4, p. 305.

⁴⁷ Brickhouse, T. & Nicholas D.S. (1994). *Plato's Socrates*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. p. 3-4.

⁴⁸ Kahn, Charles H. “Did Plato Write Socratic Dialogues?” *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*. 31.2 (1981): p. 309.

CHAPTER 3

SOCRATIC APPROACH TO PLEASURES

In this chapter, selections from the dialogues of *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *the Republic*, *Philebus*, *Alcibiades I* and *Symposium* will be examined. Socrates will change his mind about pleasure as he moves into other dialogues; however, the role of pleasure in our life will remain the same. Socrates deals with the issue of pleasure within the paths of virtue or the good life. I will here examine pleasure and how it relates to the virtuous life.

3.1 *Protagoras*

In Plato's dialogue *Protagoras* the argumentation about pleasure is mostly contained within passages 348 c – 362 a. The overall view of pleasure, in *Protagoras*, is that Socrates thinks that the pleasant life is the highest good. When it is directed wrongly, which happens due to ignorance, it brings pain into our lives. Socrates suggests for this part that we have to moderate our pleasures.

According to Socrates, people's actions depend on what they consider the best thing to do. In other words, their willing regarding behavior is bound up with their ideas about 'the best'⁴⁹. If one is in pain or is doing wrong, this is an indication that one has been overcome by pleasure; however, the power that people have can be used to

⁴⁹ Plato (1924, 1999). *Laches; Protagoras; Meno; Euthydemus* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 352 d, p. 46.

secure them from this error.⁵⁰ For Socrates, these wrong beliefs emerge out of the same cause: people think that an action is best for them; on account of their ignorance, however, they cannot see that it will be harmful. Scott Berman clarifies this problematic topic in this way:

...the many call some pains good is that they lead to health and other virtues of the body and wealth. - Alternatively, the reason the many call some pleasures bad is that they lead to sickness and poverty; which themselves lead to pain.⁵¹

In order to make clear the situation, when we do sport our bodies feel pain, our muscles stretch, however the pain here we are talking about will be beneficial for our health. While measuring our pleasures, this conflict may lead us in a wrong way; however Socrates thinks that the error lies in the false evaluation of what brings me the most pleasure.

... so if our well-being had depended on taking steps to get large quantities, and avoid small ones, what should we have judged to be the thing that saves our lives? The art of measurement or the power of appearances? The latter, as we saw, confuses us and makes us often change our minds about the same things and vacillate back and forth in our actions and choices of large and small things; but measurement would have made these appearances powerless, and given us peace of mind by showing us the truth and letting us get a firm grasp of it, and so would have saved our lives.⁵²

Jessica Moss interprets the suggestion of Socrates thus: if one chooses the method of measuring pleasure, then his or her actions do not consist in the desire for that pleasure, and so this procedure will lead him or her to the better way in their actions.⁵³

⁵⁰ Plato (1924, 1999). *Laches; Protagoras; Meno; Euthydemus* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. p. 46.

⁵¹ Berman, Scott. "Socrates and Callicles on Pleasure." *Phronesis*. 36.2 (July 91): p. 133.

⁵² Plato (1924, 1999). *Laches; Protagoras; Meno; Euthydemus* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 356 d-e, p. 50.

⁵³ Moss, Jessica. "Pleasure and Illusion in Plato." *Philosophy & Phenomenological Research*. 74.3 (2007): p. 8.

Therefore, measuring pleasures results in right attitudes and one will not run into conflicts regarding ethical duties.

In 359 e – 360 a, Socrates shows that our faculty for making choices depends on our desires. For instance, a courageous man wants to go to war because he wants to gain the honor of being in that war, or defending his country, or so on.⁵⁴ The deduction here is that our desires reflect our choices, and this example indicates that a courageous man's choice is beneficial for him, since honor is human beings' sole virtue and virtue is the ultimate good. While a person chooses his or her desires according to what will be good for him or her, the question of deciding what the best is still remains. These passages from *Protagoras* explain Socrates' view on this problematic issue.

... like someone who is good at weighing things, add up all the pleasant things and all the painful, and put the element of nearness and distance in the scale as well, and then say which are the more. For if you weigh pleasant things against pleasant, you always have to take the larger and the more, and if you weigh painful against painful, you always have to take the less and the smaller. And if you weigh pleasant against painful, if the painful are outweighed by the pleasant, no matter which are nearer and which are more distant, you have to do whatever brings the pleasant about, and if the pleasant are outweighed by the painful, you have to avoid doing it.⁵⁵

Socrates shows us that measuring will result in right action, in the avoidance of painfulness and ultimately the highest good—which brings a truly pleasant life. One cannot say that the cause of a wrong act is the desire for pleasure. Rather, wrong actions emerge from ignorance. We already have the knowledge of what is best for us; we can measure the emotions and their reflections—whether they are pleasant or painful. Therefore, if one's action is wrong, the only explanation of this fault is one's

⁵⁴ Plato (1924, 1999). *Laches; Protagoras; Meno; Euthydemus* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 359 e- 360 a, p. 54.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, p. 50.

ignorance.⁵⁶ One thing that has to be pointed here is that Socrates does not separate pleasures from pains; he takes them as a whole. In the next dialogues he will resolve and delineate them.

3.2 *Gorgias*

In *Protagoras* Socrates' approach to pleasure is measuring it. In *Gorgias*, he approaches pleasure—at least, the physical pleasures—with the examples of a temperate man and an intemperate one within the allegory of a *leaky jar*, in his debate with Callicles. For Callicles, if one's desires are completed, then he or she has the happiest life, whereas Socrates insists on the happiest life being possible only if one gets rid of violent desires. In order to clarify these statements, Socrates uses the *leaky jar* allegory:

Socrates: There are two men, both of whom have a number of casks; the one man has his casks sound and full, one of wine, another of honey, and a third of milk, besides others filled with other liquids, and the streams which fill them are few and scanty, and he can only obtain them with a great deal of toil and difficulty; but when his casks are once filled he has no need to feed them anymore, and has no further trouble with them or care about them. The other, in like manner, can procure streams, though not without difficulty; but his vessels are leaky and unsound, and night and day he is compelled to be filling them, and if he pauses for a moment, he is in an agony of pain. Such are their respective lives:—and now would you say that the life of the intemperate is happier than that of the temperate? Do I not convince you that the opposite is the truth?

Callicles: You do not convince me, Socrates, for the one who has filled himself has no longer any pleasure left; and this, as I was just now saying, is the life of a stone: he has neither joy nor sorrow after he is once filled; but the pleasure depends on the superabundance of the influx.⁵⁷

As can be seen at the end of this part of the dialogue, Callicles is not persuaded by Socrates' propositions. For him, only if we replenish our desires or pleasures will we

⁵⁶ Plato (1924, 1999). *Laches; Protagoras; Meno; Euthydemus* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. p. 51.

⁵⁷ Plato (1925, 2001). *Lysis; Symposium; Gorgias* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 493 a – 494 b, pp. 113-14.

achieve the good life, the happiest life. Whether the temperate man has a jar that is adequately filled or not, he will not be happy. However, Socrates' first aim here is pointing out that the temperate man's jar is filled sufficiently in contrast to the intemperate man's. The second point is that, because of having a jar like a sieve, the intemperate man will try to fill it with an endless effort, but he will never achieve his goal. On the other hand, the temperate man will not try to fill his vessel because he has a sufficient one and therefore will be at peace. As Gerd Van Riel summarizes "... such a life is like a *leaky jar*, which never attains complete repletion. It will never be satisfied, as it lacks measure."⁵⁸ According to Socrates, if we measure our pleasures, we will not have a leaky jar, and so we will not make an endless effort to fill it; on the contrary, by having a sufficient jar, which is constituted by measured pleasures, we will have a happy life.

The other point that has to be discussed in the context of *Gorgias* is that Socrates rebuts the claim that pleasure is good with the examples of a brave and wise man versus a cowardly and foolish man. Callicles claims that good and bad fortune cannot be possessed by one person at the same time. Socrates suggests that when one is hungry, one eats food or in the other case if one is thirsty, one drinks; as can be seen in the examples, pain yields pleasure at the same time.⁵⁹ Callicles agrees with this example, however, this affirmation of his will refute what he stands for. The significance here is that, since a man cannot have a good and evil fortune at the same time, pleasure and pain cannot be fitted under the labels of good and evil.⁶⁰ In order to

⁵⁸ Riel, Gerd Van. *Pleasure and the good life: Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonists*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000. p.12.

⁵⁹ Plato (1925, 2001). *Lysis; Symposium; Gorgias* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 496 e, p. 118.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, p. 119.

clarify this statement, Socrates continues with the brave man and the coward man examples:

And do you call the fools and cowards good men? For you were saying just now that the courageous and the wise are the good—would you not say so? -Certainly. And did you never see a foolish child rejoicing? - Yes, I have. And a foolish man too? - Yes, certainly... And did you ever see a sensible man rejoicing or sorrowing? -Yes. Which rejoice and sorrow most—the wise or the foolish? –They are much upon a par, I think, in that respect. And did you ever see a coward in battle? -To be sure. And which rejoiced most at the departure of the enemy, the coward or the brave? - I should say ‘most’ of both; or at any rate, they rejoiced about equally. No matter; then the cowards, and not only the brave, rejoice? - Greatly. And the foolish; so it would seem? - Yes. And are only the cowards pained at the approach of their enemies, or are the brave also pained? - Both are pained. And are they equally pained? - I should imagine that the cowards are more pained. And are they not better pleased at the enemy’s departure? - I dare say. Then are the foolish and the wise and the cowards and the brave all pleased and pained, as you were saying, in nearly equal degree; but are the cowards more pleased and pained than the brave? - Yes. But surely the wise and brave are the good, and the foolish and the cowardly are the bad? - Yes. Then the good and the bad are pleased and pained in a nearly equal degree? - Yes. Then the good and the bad are pleased and pained in a nearly equal degree? - Yes.⁶¹

As a cowardly man enjoys pleasure as much as the brave man does, the pleasure which we are talking about in these examples cannot, for Socrates, be regarded as good. If we accept that the cowardly man is bad and the brave man is good; and if their degrees of pleasure are similar to each other, then we cannot say that the pleasure is good because the bad man enjoys the same degree of pleasure as the good man. As this proposition is confirmed, it leads to a new hypothesis: when one chooses the pleasure X, that means the other pleasure Y is not better than pleasure X. The criterion of selection between these two pleasures depends on our faculty for choosing, or our aims regarding actions that we will in relation to them. What Socrates tries to indicate is that the faculty of choosing does not depend on the pleasures that we get; on the contrary, it depends on an external reason which lies outside the scope of pleasures.

⁶¹ Plato (1925, 2001). *Lysis; Symposium; Gorgias* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. pp. 120-1.

Good and evil lie within our aims and motivations. In *Gorgias*, Socrates points out that our criteria for choosing what is evil for us, or what is good for us, are not independent of knowledge. If the choosing acts were based only on our aims or motivations, namely experiences, we could not know what is good or what is evil; therefore, the choosing part must be ruled by knowledge. In other words, for Socrates we must choose pleasures as good or evil according to our art of knowledge.⁶² Our choice of pleasures must not be ruled only by experience, as this will bring us unhappiness; and we have to discriminate among them with knowledge. According to Berman, Socrates' point in *Gorgias* is that if one approaches one's desires with the knowledge of the right structures with an understanding of the proper relationship of knowledge to pleasures and desires, knowing what is good or evil for one's self, and then one will be aware of the outcomes of one's actions. The manners of such a person are composed of ideas which leads to right actions, thus this person will be temperate.⁶³

In *Protagoras* the main idea is the measurement of pleasure. If we govern this measurement only by experience, then we cannot decide what will be beneficial for us. In *Gorgias*, Socrates strongly suggests that only by knowledge can we know which pleasures are good and which are evil. Our choices' foundation should be in the hands of knowledge.

3.3 *Phaedo*

Phaedo: Socrates, ..., saying, how singular is the thing called pleasure, and how curiously related to pain, which might be thought to be opposite of it; for they are never present to a man at the same instant, and yet he who pursues either is generally compelled to take the other; their bodies are two, but they are joined by a single head.⁶⁴

⁶² Plato (1925, 2001). *Lysis; Symposium; Gorgias* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 500 a- c, p. 124.

⁶³ Berman, Scott. "Socrates and Callicles on Pleasure." *Phronesis*. 36.2 (July 91), p. 138.

⁶⁴ Plato (1914, 2001). *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus* (H. N. Fowler, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, pp. 2- 3.

In *Phaedo*, the very first comment regarding pleasure shows us that, even though the meanings of pleasure and pain differ from each other, they are still connected in the process of experience. They entail each other's existence. When pain is experienced, pleasure's existence comes along with it.

The dialogue goes on to discuss the philosopher's life as it relates to pleasure. A philosopher is concerned with the soul's needs, and not giving importance to bodily ones. Here is a quotation from *Phaedo* that shows us how utterly the philosopher's focus is on his or her soul:

Socrates: ... Ought the philosopher to care about the pleasures- if they are to be called pleasures- of eating and drinking?

Simmias: Certainly not.

Socrates: And what about the pleasures of love – should he care for them?

Simmias: By no means.

Socrates: And will he think much of the other ways of indulging the body, for example, the acquisition of costly raiment, or sandals, or other adornments of the body? Instead of caring about them, does he not rather despise anything more than nature needs? What do you say?

Simmias: I should say that the true philosopher would despise them.

Socrates: Would you not say that he is entirely concerned with the soul and not with the body? He would like, as far as he can, to get away from the body and to turn to the soul.

Simmias: Quite true.

Socrates: In matters of this sort philosophers, above all other men, may be observed in every sort of way to dis sever the soul from the communion of the body.

Simmias: Very true.⁶⁵

This dialogue leads us to the distinction between body and soul. According to Socrates, a true philosopher aligns him or herself to the concerns of the soul, the site in which truth exists.⁶⁶ The absolute good, namely truth, cannot be reached by our

⁶⁵ Plato (1914, 2001). *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus* (H. N. Fowler, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁶ *ibid*, p. 5.

senses; in externality. What makes truth reachable is in the way of reason or mind, which is not in our body; on the contrary, its existence is in our soul.

Socrates: For the body is a source of endless trouble to us by reason of the mere requirement of food and is liable also to diseases which overtake and impede us in the search of true being. ... the body is always breaking in upon us, causing turmoil and confusion in our enquiries, and so amazing us that we are prevented from seeing the truth. It has been proved to us by experience that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we must be quit of the body – the soul in herself must behold things in themselves: and then we shall attain the wisdom which we desire... for if while in company with the body, the soul cannot have pure knowledge.⁶⁷

From these words, one can deduce that in order to have pure knowledge, liberating one's self from the chains of the body is necessary. These obstacles in the way of knowledge are directly linked to bodily necessities, and a philosopher is indifferent to their kinds of pleasures. Socrates indicates that only through understanding—or reason, or mind—can we obtain pure knowledge. Even though most of Plato dialogues' interpreters treat this dialogue as if it claimed that we had to rid our lives of pleasures permanently, Russell suggests that a philosopher is also in connection with pleasures, just as non-philosophers are. However, he or she does not direct his or her motivations, actions, and attitudes according to pleasures. While non-philosophers indulge in pleasure in proportion to their level of goodness, the philosopher's enjoyment is not in these pleasures; he or she knows what really matters, he or she will appreciate things according to their values. Therefore, the decision will lie in what they choose to enjoy and what they choose to abstain from.⁶⁸ As Socrates suggests, bodily needs bring us harm and problems, so a philosopher should not pay attention to these traps; he or she should know where the foundation of true knowledge is located, and act upon it. Thus a philosopher's value will bring to him or

⁶⁷ Plato (1914, 2001). *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus* (H. N. Fowler, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁸ Russell, Daniel. *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 90 – 91.

her enjoyment; however, this enjoyment will not be the same pleasures or enjoyments that ordinary people indulge in.

3.4 Alcibiades 1

Socrates: ...And I will tell you the hope in which you are at present living: Before many days have elapsed, you think that you will come before the Athenian assembly, and will prove to them that you are more worthy of honor than Pericles, or any other man that ever lived, and having proved this, you will have the greatest power in the state. When you have gained the greatest power among us, you will go on to other Hellenic states, and not only to Hellenes, but to all the barbarians who inhabit the same continent with us. And if the God were then to say to you again: Here in Europe is to be your seat of empire, and you must not cross over into Asia or meddle with Asiatic affairs, I do not believe that you would choose to live upon these terms; but the world, as I may say, must be filled with your power and name.⁶⁹

From the explanation of Alcibiades' life according to Socrates, Alcibiades seems to stand for the man of bodily pleasures. In his effort to prove that he is a respected person; his attempts to become the most powerful both among Hellenic states and on the other continents; his endless concern with reputation proves this claim from the outset of the dialogue. After this identification is made clear, Socrates criticizes Alcibiades regarding his aim of giving advice to Athens. Socrates starts to prove his point by saying that he actually knows nothing what he claims to know about the Athenians. The cross-examination starts with the question of how one can say that he or she knows something. Regarding the issue of teaching and giving advice, Socrates says that though Alcibiades would give advice about architecture, he is not the one who should talk about it. As a matter of fact, the architect is the one who should talk because he or she knows better than Alcibiades. Alcibiades admits his ignorance at this point. When Alcibiades' teaching is discussing in the dialogue⁷⁰, Socrates shows to Alcibiades that his lectures given by Pericles cannot be comparable with the teachings of the Persians' little prince. In this statement, there are four teachers of the

⁶⁹ Plato (1953). *Dialogues* (B. Jowett, Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press. 105b-c, p. 630.

⁷⁰ *ibid*, p. 650.

prince, who are the best in their field; namely the wisest, the most temperate and the most valiant. The most temperate person teaches the prince about the pleasures. In order to be a free person, and also a king, he needs to be ruler of himself. Being the ruler here means that he must control his pleasures and he cannot be a slave of them. The teaching that Alcibiades received did not include this kind of knowledge or aim. While they are talking their enemies, Socrates speaks of the Lacedaemonians and acknowledges to Alcibiades that he also lacks of their qualities: “If you look at the temperance and orderliness and ease and grace and magnanimity and courage and endurance and love of toil and desire of glory and ambition of the Lacedaemonians”⁷¹. Alcibiades, like his other colleagues, does not have these qualifications, and so they will be always defeated by their enemies because of their ignorance. Jowett’s analysis shows how this ignorance of Alcibiades leads the reader to the knowledge of virtue:

But he (Alcibiades) is not too old to learn, and may still arrive at the truth. He must know himself; that is to say, not his body, or the things of the body, but his mind, or truer self. The physician knows the body, and the tradesman knows his own business, but they do not necessarily know themselves. Self-knowledge can be obtained only by looking into the mind and virtue of the soul, which is the diviner part of a man, as we see our own image in another's eye. And if we do not know ourselves, we cannot know what belongs to ourselves or belongs to others. Both for the sake of the individual and of the state, we ought to aim at justice and temperance, not at wealth or power.⁷²

For Socrates, the soul contains this knowledge; when looking into our souls wisdom will not be far away of us, and with wisdom happiness will be attainable by free people, just as the other dialogues also claim. He seeks happiness again in this dialogue; at the end of it he concludes that happiness requires virtue that is located in our souls. From these words, we can deduce that self-knowledge is the very first step of happiness. While Socrates chooses here to give the example of the Persians, his

⁷¹ Plato (1953). *Dialogues* (B. Jowett, Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 655.

⁷² *ibid*, p. 627.

idea of control over the pleasures overlaps with the other dialogues of Plato that deal with pleasures. Moreover, in order to be virtuous, what one has to focused on is justice and wisdom, not on authority, possessions, and the like⁷³, as Jowett has stated. Even though the pleasures do not come up as a topic in this dialogue, Alcibiades' characterization of the problem, and the treatment offered, point to a link between happiness, virtue, knowledge of the good, and the importance of the care of the soul.

3.5 The Symposium

In the *Symposium*, Eros—the god of love—is described by different philosophers. The main theme of the dialogue is the question of what love is. The dialogue starts with praise for Eros, offered because literature does not have any kind of eulogy for him despite the fact that he is the most beautiful of all gods. When it comes Socrates' turn to speak, he judges other speakers' descriptions of Eros because they attribute all things that are labeled as good in their lives without checking the truth of their eulogies of him. He immediately starts his cross-examining and continues by quoting a dialogue between himself and Diotima, the stranger of Mantinea, whose views he agrees with strongly.

Diotima claims that all human beings run after happiness and wish for the good for themselves.⁷⁴ For her, love is the desire for both the good and happiness. While looking for the good is a natural impulse, one has trouble separating one's self from the beauty, though this is what good people do. This beauty can be of both the soul and the body— she does not reject the beauty of the body at this point. However, for her the beauty of the soul is prior to bodily beauty. One may devote one's self to the earthly beauties, but after experiencing bodily beauty in the full, a person will come to be fascinated by the pure and absolute existence of beauty. For her, the beauty of the

⁷³ In *Alcibiades I*, the statements are in between the sections of 134a-135a.

⁷⁴ Plato (1953). *Dialogues* (B. Jowett, Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 536.

body is not as strong and beautiful of the soul's beauty. The true and pure beauty of our selves is eternal and everlasting and it is the soul's beauty. Once, the unique and divine beauty of the soul is at hand, no one can separate it from his or her own existence.

...a beauty which if you once beheld, you would see not to be after the measure of gold, and garments, and fair boys and youths, whose presence now entrances you. But what if man had eyes to see the true beauty—the divine beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colors and vanities of human life—thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty simple and divine? Remember how in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an image but of a reality), and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life?⁷⁵

In other Socratic dialogues, the soul is always connected to the good, the knowledge and the happiness. Human being's ignorance or in the case of overcoming by pleasures can prevent from following the good, reason and being virtuous. While we may note that the *Symposium* does not talk about pleasures, the discussion Diotima's thoughts, which are accepted by Socrates, show that the beauty of the body should not be people's main motive in their lives. With the divine beauty realized, one will know and devote one's self to true being. In addition to that, In Alcibiades' eulogy Socrates is described as a self-controlled person who is not ruled by the beauty of the body, and who does not pay attention to wealth or possessions, fame or reputation.⁷⁶ At this point, the common motivation of human beings to reach good and happiness, the higher existence of soul, the virtue innate in it, and the positioning of the beauty of the body in second place gives the sense of the topic of pleasure is lurking in the text.

⁷⁵ Plato (1953). *Dialogues* (B. Jowett, Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp. 542-543.

⁷⁶ *ibid*, pp. 548-551.

3.6 The Republic

In the *Republic*, the three parts of the soul, and the philosopher's attitude towards pleasures, are discussed. The dialogue emphasizes that one can live a virtuous life by governing the pleasures, and how one must direct his or her pleasures is also explained.

Socrates depicts a person who is aware of how one can get the most pleasure from life. Even though he or she has this kind of knowledge, in order to walk in the virtuous path of this life, he or she has to be governed by reason, understanding, and so on.⁷⁷ According to Socrates, the most choice-worthy life is the philosopher's life and thus a philosopher's life is the definition of a pleasant life. Here, the philosopher's account of pleasure is true pleasure. Socrates opposes the idea that pure pleasure is anything other than the avoidance of pain; conversely, he holds that pure pain is the cessation of pleasure. The following passage from the *Republic* clarifies what true pleasure is here: "...there are many others, too, but, if you are willing to reflect on them, the pleasures of smells in particular. For these, without previous pain, suddenly become extraordinarily great and, once having ceased, leave no pain behind."⁷⁸

According to Warren, by pure pleasure Socrates means that there is no stage of pain before or after pleasure. That means a pain does not yield true pleasure or a true pleasure is not accompanied by pain. This is also valid for pain: a pure pain does not turn into pleasure afterwards, or pleasure does not cause pain.⁷⁹ While Socrates is

⁷⁷ Plato (1968). *The Republic of Plato* (A. Bloom, Trans.). New York: Basic Books. 586 e – 587 a, pp. 269.

⁷⁸ *ibid*, p. 266.

⁷⁹ Warren, James. "Socrates and the Patients: *Republic* IX, 583c-585a." *Phronesis*. 56.2 (Feb 2011), p. 127.

explaining true pleasure, and how this kind of pleasure can only be attained by philosophers, he also gives the parts of the soul in accordance with pleasure.⁸⁰

First part: governed by the faculty of learning: desire and pleasure are philosophical
Second part: led by a passionate spirit, has its desire and pleasure in power, success and honor
Third part: the appetitive one, has its desire and pleasure in money and gain.⁸¹

These parts of the soul each reveal different kinds of pleasures. Only the philosopher takes all of the pleasures in harmony, but he or she at the same time despises them and treats them indifferently. The others experience these pleasures too, but they cannot see where their reality lies. The greatest pleasure happens when all three parts of the soul are ruled by reason or understanding, which is only done by the wise man or, in other words, the philosopher. The following passage explains the soul's acceptance of reason and its consequences from the perspectives of the tyrant, who is a dictator, and of the king, who is a philosopher:

... when all the soul follows the philosophic and is not factious, the result is that each part may, so far as other things are concerned, mind its own business and be just and, in particular, enjoy its own pleasures, the best pleasures, and, to the greatest possible extent, the truest pleasures.

That's entirely certain.

And, therefore, when one of the other parts gets control, the result is that it can't discover its own pleasure and compels the others to pursue an alien and untrue pleasure.

That's so, he said.

Doesn't what is most distant from philosophy and argument produce such results?
asked Socrates.

By far.

And is what is most distant from law and order most distant from argument?

Plainly.

And didn't the erotic and tyrannical desires come to light as most distant?

By far.

And the kingly and orderly ones least distant?

⁸⁰ Riel, Gerd Van. *Pleasure and the Good Life: Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonists*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000. p. 14.

⁸¹ The parts of the soul in each cases showing typical pleasures, desires and governing principle.

Yes.

Then I suppose the tyrant will be most distant from a pleasure that is true and is properly his own, while the king is least distant.

Necessarily.

And therefore, the tyrant will live most unpleasantly and the king most pleasantly.⁸²

In all dialogues Socrates thinks that our most real entity is our mind. In *the Republic*, he adds that if these three parts are satisfied by intelligence, then one can get the most pleasure from life, and one will be the most pleased being in the world. The other people who think that the *good* is pleasure, will never know what reality is, because their satisfaction's ground is founded in the false reflections of pleasures or namely 'illusory paintings'.⁸³ One can deduce from these words that only the philosopher's, or the king's, or the wise person's pleasure is real. In such a person, the three parts of the soul are in harmony. Their attitudes, actions, tendencies and behaviors are governed by reason or intelligence. Therefore they do not fall into the traps of pleasures. While other people suffer from pleasures and live a miserable life, the wise walk in the path of virtuous life, in which they are supremely pleased.

3.7 Philebus

Up to now the other dialogues have led us to the connection between pleasures and the virtuous life. According to Socrates, a virtuous life is the good life. In the *Philebus*, because the virtuous life's leader is reason or intelligence, Socrates shows the connection of pleasure to it. The discussion starts with the Socrates' claim that our pleasures are constant: even if one pleasure is satisfied at one time, the other pleasures' need will emerge. The issue here is not any difficulty of satisfying pleasure, but rather their constant and uncontrollable existence. When we are hungry we eat, or when we are thirsty we drink; even when satisfaction seems to be integrated

⁸² Plato (1968). *The Republic of Plato* (A. Bloom, Trans.). New York: Basic Books. 586 e – 587 b, pp. 269-70.

⁸³ Plato (1968). *The Republic of Plato* (A. Bloom, Trans.). New York: Basic Books. 586 a – c, p. 268.

with pleasure, the replenishment of a lack is always thwarted by a new lack, according to Riel.⁸⁴ Even when one satisfaction is completed, as long as the other lacks exist, these satisfactions can never be truly fulfilled. Replenishment of our lacks is constant and unavoidable as the existence of other lacks.

In *Philebus*, there are three categories of pleasures. The first category is termed genuine pleasures, and consists of the bodily pleasures. For example, drinking water when one is thirsty.⁸⁵ The other stage is about our mixed pleasures. By ‘mixed’ Socrates emphasizes the combination between the body’s pleasures and those of the soul. Socrates explains this group of pleasures with these words in the *Philebus*:

...as far as the pleasures are concerned which consist in the mixed feelings of the body alone, when these feelings are combined, those within with those without. But with respect to those in the mind, which have joint effects contrary to those of the body, mental pleasure at the same time in contrast with bodily pain, and pain with pleasure, so that both combinations form one mixture ... when a man gets empty he longs for repletion, and that in his hope he feels joy, while in getting empty he feels pain.⁸⁶

The last group of pleasures consists of the mixture of pleasure and pain in the soul; and this stage’s mixture does not include the bodily pleasures and pains. Firstly, Socrates acknowledges that such feelings are a mixture of pleasure and pain.

Socrates: And can you be ignorant of the disposition of our minds in the acting of the comedies,—that even here there is a mixture of pain and pleasure.

Protarchus: I don't quite see that.

Socrates: Perhaps not. It certainly is not easy, Protarchus, in this case to comprehend in every instance the existence of such a mixed feeling.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Riel, Gerd Van. *Pleasure and the Good Life: Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonists*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000. p. 20.

⁸⁵ Plato (1925, 1990). *Statesman-Philebus-Ion* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press. 46 c- 47 a, pp. 74-6.

⁸⁶ *ibid*, p. 77.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, p. 78.

After this statement, the continuing dialogue is linked to an allegory. Socrates explains his suggestion by the example of a theatrical comedy in the explanation of an envious man. Though envy seems to be a pain of the mind, an envious man will be pleased when he sees other people's misfortune. In other words, his enjoyment will depend on others' suffering. This will prove that pleasure and pain are two different types of emotions, and their existence occurs in a single concept and in a single soul, which takes place in the third category. The envious man's delight in other people's misfortune is grounded in the delight of his own ill-will. Like in the case of the theatrical comedy, we laugh at other people's misery and bad luck. Here is the passage about the third group of pleasures in the *Philebus*:

Socrates: The term envy we just now used,—will you define it to be a distress of mind, or how?

Protarchus: As you state it.

Socrates: But surely the envious man will be found to feel a sudden pleasure when he hears of the misfortunes of others.

Protarchus: Assuredly.

Socrates: Well, ignorance, and what we call a stupid state of mind, is a misfortune.

Protarchus: Of course.

Socrates: From these considerations then see what the real nature of the sense of the ridiculous is.

Protarchus: You have only to state it.

Socrates: There is, then, a kind of ill-nature, speaking generally, which takes its name from a particular habit; and of this general ill-nature ridicule is a part...⁸⁸

In addition to these kinds of pleasures, Socrates distinguishes pleasure into two, true and false pleasures. According to Harte, this separation arises from the concept of anticipated pleasures, in other words, the truth or falsity of the pleasures depends on anticipated pleasures. If a pleasure is composed of false anticipation, then this kind of pleasure will be labeled as false. The kind of anticipation will determine the truth or

⁸⁸ Plato (1925, 1990). *Statesman-Philebus-Ion* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press. 48 b, p. 79.

falsity of the pleasure.⁸⁹ When the topic is false pleasures, Sylvain Delcomminette gives a threefold explanation for how false pleasures come into existence:

...to the three levels at which falsity can take place: in phantasma, in the appearance or in the concept. This division of false pleasures is exhaustive, for falsity cannot occur outside these three levels... The phantasma is the mere image of the appearance, and therefore it can only be true if the appearance itself is true; and the truth of the concept is the necessary condition of the truth of both the appearance and the phantasma, for the person who does only have a false concept of pleasure at his disposal will never be able to have a true appearance and the phantasma, and still less a true phantasma of pleasure.⁹⁰

In Delcomminette's understanding of false pleasures, the levels are linked to each other; they are inseparable. For example, in order to talk about the appearance level, firstly, one has to confirm the level of phantasm. If the phantasm is wrong then the rest will be wrong or false upon it. Both of the philosophers start from the anticipated pleasures and explain which type of pleasure is true or false. Throughout the dialogue Socrates accepts the existence of true pleasure and clarifies it with two adjectives: unmixed and moderate.⁹¹ This definition will bring no harm or violence to human beings because a true pleasure consists in undoing the existence of distress, and thus a human being can live a happy, virtuous and good life.

In this chapter I tried to explain how pleasure in Socratic dialogues appears in different ways. In *Protagoras* the measurement of pleasure is discussed. This claim is strengthened in *Gorgias* by the argument about the treatment of pleasures. Socrates says in *Phaedo* that a philosopher is governed by reason, not by bodily needs. By controlling and directing pleasures, a philosopher also takes pleasure from life. In

⁸⁹ Harte, Verity. "The Philebus on Pleasure." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. 104.2 (April 2004). pp 124,-5.

⁹⁰ Delcomminette, Sylvain. "False Pleasures, Appearance and Imagination in the 'Philebus'." *Phronesis*. 48.3 (2003). p. 236.

⁹¹ Plato (1925, 1990). *Statesman-Philebus-Ion* (W.R.M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press. 50 e- 52 d, pp. 84-7.

Alcibiades I, control over pleasures is considered to be virtuous, and if we wish to be virtuous, then the care of the soul must be prior to the body. The *Symposium*, being self-controlled, is symbolized by the character of Socrates who is indifferent to bodily pleasures, and the higher position of the soul over the body is a statement about the happy and virtuous life which shows again the key role of pleasures in the makeup of a happy life.

In *the Republic*, three parts of the soul manifest themselves. This idea's link to pleasure is that every part of the soul indicates other types of pleasures and only a philosopher knows how to get away from false pleasures. In *Philebus* this argument is developed further and fulfills itself in the concept of true pleasure. In these dialogues, it is strongly expressed that in order to live a virtuous life, since one cannot get rid of pleasures or pains, one has to govern them with knowledge, reason, mind, intelligence or understanding. In order to give a moral aspect to this explanation, Brickhouse and Smith assert that in Plato's dialogues, Socrates claims that passions and appetites play a major role in our ideas and actions. Although one always wants what is good for itself, the outcomes of our passions and appetites might be harmful to us. According to Socrates, the solution of this consequence is a proper education, and with this education one can regulate and control the appetites and passions.⁹² Only with this method can one live a virtuous life—a virtuous life being the good life and also the happiest life.

⁹² Brickhouse, Thomas C., and Nicholas D. Smith. *Socratic Moral Psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. 133-142.

CHAPTER 4

STOICISM

Stoicism belongs among the outcomes of the Hellenistic School's teachings. It is about the investigation of virtue with relation to happiness. For the philosophers of this school, philosophy is the cure and the answer in this investigation of happiness. They do not try to find the answer outside of the human being; on the contrary, they point out that human being's themselves, and their thoughts and behaviors, will be the tool of happiness. Their philosophy begins with the claim of our souls are sick with passions that are derived from daily life. The soul is rational, and emotions which are the portions of passions are irrational; they do not come from birth and they do harm to our souls with pulling down us and cause unhappiness. In order to prevent and in fact eradicate this source of unhappiness, the answers are directed toward human activity, and are based on morality. With the acknowledgment of a rational soul and its subsequent sickness, Stoicism, like an ethical hospital, suggests that the cure of this sickness is possible.⁹³ Using reason, acting upon the good with complete self-control and volition against the effects of emotions will ensure happiness. It can be said that their system is anthropocentric in its understanding of empiricism with the help of rationalism. Their idea of the soul related philosophy's pure and definite explanation can be summarized as:

⁹³ Holowchak, M.A. "Education as Training for Life: Stoic teachers as physicians of the soul." *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 41.2 (2009): p. 167.

Of all the schools it is the Stoics, I think, who most effectively combine recognition of depth in the soul with respect for the pupil's active practical reasoning, producing a picture of philosophical friendship that combines intimacy with symmetry and reciprocity, a picture of self-scrutiny that supplements, and does not displace, dialectical philosophical procedures.⁹⁴

According to Stoicism, all human beings' final end and highest good is happiness. On this topic Stoicism follows the idea of Socrates: Happiness is available only by virtue. In fact, virtue by itself is sufficient for happiness. Socrates' philosophical footprints are still vivid in the Stoics' understanding of virtue: Virtue is the knowledge of goodness and evilness. Happiness for them is living virtuously, and such a life is bounded with knowledge. When this framework of happiness is inverted, one will admit that in order to be happy, the Stoics' pre condition is knowledge. Without knowing good and evil, virtue cannot be possible from this aspect. As Mark Holowchak says: "The Stoic happiness is essentially linked to the possibility of knowledge, because happiness is nothing more than knowledge... A happy life fully and exclusively concerns with the acquisition of knowledge."⁹⁵ Stoicism tries to identify the nature of happiness because of the given fact of general unhappiness among human beings. Since the problem is the unhappiness of humans, so it will be reasonable to seek for solutions to it in human beings. This investigation will be done by the Stoics, who are focused on the conditions of the soul.

4.1 Cosmos

The god himself who is the individual quality consisting of the totality of substance, who is indestructible and ungenerated, being the craftsman of the organization, taking substance as totality back into himself in certain (fixed) temporal cycles, and again generating it out of himself... And the cosmos in the sense of individual quality of the substance of the universe

⁹⁴ Nussbaum, M.C. *The therapy of desire: theory and practice in Hellenistic ethics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996. p. 490.

⁹⁵ Holowchak, Mark. *Happiness and Greek ethical thought*. London; New York: Continuum, c2004. pp. 103-104.

is either, a complex of heaven and earth and the natures in them or a complex of gods and humans and the things that come to be for their sake.⁹⁶

The Stoics handle the cosmos as a whole; god, humans, animals, and every single being are parts of this one single existence. Holowchak says that for the earlier Stoics, Zeno and Chrysippus, the cosmos is within a harmony and human beings should act upon this harmony—in fact, they regard this type of action as a duty. The understanding of virtue as being performed within the harmony of cosmos gets more attention and place in Roman Stoics' philosophies.⁹⁷ With both the earlier Stoics and the other members of Stoicism, their philosophy and teachings embrace not only individuals but also the whole universe. According to them, we are all connected to each other, thus our moral acts should be regarded as for own sake and the society's.

The first and closest circle is one that a person has drawn as though around a center—his own mind. That circle encloses the body and anything taken for the sake of the body. It is virtually the smallest circle and it almost touches the center itself. Next, the second one, further removed from the center but enclosing the first circle, contains parents, siblings, wife, and children. The third one has in it uncles and aunts, grandparents, nephews, nieces, and cousins. The next circle includes the other relatives, and that is followed by the circle of local residents, then the circle of fellow-demes-men, next that of fellow-citizens, and then in the same way the circle of people from neighboring towns, and the circle of fellow-countrymen. The outermost and largest circle, which encompasses all the rest, is that of the whole human race.⁹⁸

Hierocles, as it is accepted by other followers of Stoicism, explains the cosmos in ten circles with the bounds between human beings. He makes clear that human beings are all united in this harmonious system. Since we are all a member of this unified cosmic

⁹⁶ Laertius, Diogenes (1925). *Lives of eminent philosophers* (R.D. Hicks, Trans.), Vol. 2. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann. Text 25, 7.137-138, p. 51.

⁹⁷ Holowchak, Mark. *Happiness and Greek ethical thought*. London; New York: Continuum, c2004. pp. 197-198.

⁹⁸ Holowchak, M.A. "Education as Training for Life: Stoic teachers as physicians of the soul." *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 41.2 (2009): pp. 168-169.

society, our every action will affect not only our life but also the order of the society. This is why the Stoics see moral acts as a duty of every individual. What is appropriate in action is thinking and behaving in accordance with nature, with the harmony of the cosmos—that is to say, with the reason. “Zeno says, ‘The rational is better than what is not rational; but nothing is better than the cosmos; therefore, the cosmos is something rational.’”⁹⁹ Therefore, the thoughts and acts of an individual should be based on reason, not just for one’s own good but for the cosmos itself as well.

4.2 Reason

Though Hierocles’ structure of cosmos points out the impartibility of human beings, one may object to this schema with the assertion of irrefutable facts of differences among human beings. By status, genders, phobias, habits, jobs, wealth and with many different aspects people do differentiate to one another. However, for the Stoics with the acceptance of this diversity about human beings, we are inextricable from the cosmos’ harmony and we have one side that unifies us and makes us the same, namely reason. This most precious property of our being is connected with god in Stoicism. God, which is a sense of cosmos in Stoic view and can also be termed mind or fate¹⁰⁰, has perfect rationality. According to Diogenes, human beings all have this same part, namely rationality.¹⁰¹ Epictetus also admits this godly part of human beings: “We (gods) have given you a certain portion of our self, this power of pursuit and avoidance, of desire and aversion, and, to put it simply, the power to use

⁹⁹ Inwood, B. & Gerson P.L. *The Stoics reader: selected writings and testimonia*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co., Inc., 2008. Text 33, 9. 104, p. 83.

¹⁰⁰ Laertius, Diogenes (1925). *Lives of eminent philosophers* (R.D. Hicks, Trans.), Vol. 2. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann. text 25, 7.135, p. 52.

¹⁰¹ *ibid*, p 58.

appearances.”¹⁰² Since humans are rational beings and they are already looking for the good as a natural instinct, the answer for the Stoics is simple; the good is equal to our reason, by using it the good will be present in our lives: “Rationality, then, and the good coincide in god, and can coincide in man if he perfects his reason. Since the good is beneficial and the god is agreed to be good, god’s sum of activities is beneficial and helpful to man.”¹⁰³

According to the Stoic thought, from birth, the actions and choices of human beings depend on the idea of good. If one thinks that X will be good for him or her, then this person will act upon it. All our actions depend on the good of human beings. As it has been stated in the quotation above, for humans the good is embodied in reason. For the Stoics, the good is identical with happiness which is linked with virtue. The reason is the invincibility of human beings. By using reason, humans have power reaching the good actions and being virtuous, which will lead happiness.

4.3 Virtue

As the two former topics showed the inextricability of human beings in the cosmos and also reason’s inseparability from the soul, when virtue is being discussed, one has to evaluate it by integrating it with happiness. Living according to nature is identical with living according to reason and by acting upon it one will be virtuous person, whose life can be named as happy. It can be deduced that living in accordance with nature is identical with living in accordance with virtue, as Zenon claims as well.¹⁰⁴ Happiness is not just final end of human being; it is also the ultimate good of our life.

¹⁰² Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 1.1.1 , p. 11.

¹⁰³ Long, A.A. & D.N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987. p. 374.

¹⁰⁴ Laertius, Diogenes (1925). *Lives of eminent philosophers* (R.D. Hicks, Trans.), Vol. 2. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann. 7.87, p. 195.

In order to be happy one has to be a virtuous person and this can be achieved in two ways: using reason correctly and acting upon its results.

Virtue, by leading right action and pointing out what is good and evil, is choice-worthy¹⁰⁵ because it is good¹⁰⁶ and in this universe, good is always choice-worthy. John Sellars states that, as human beings, we are rational by the virtue of the soul, and in the nourishment of soul's rationality virtue plays the biggest role.¹⁰⁷

There are four basic virtues in Stoic philosophy: prudence, courage, justice and temperance. They are the knowledge about what is good and evil. As for the vices, such as injustice, cowardice, and imprudence, they are on the contrary pieces of ignorance, as stated by Laertius:¹⁰⁸

...prudence is the knowledge of which things are good and bad and neither; courage is knowledge of which things are to be chosen and avoided and neither... (as alterations of these four virtues he continues) endurance is the knowledge of or a condition what one is to stand firmly by and what one is not to stand firmly by and what is neither... and deliberative excellence is a knowledge of how to consider the type and manner of actions which we must perform in order to act advantageously.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Laertius, Diogenes (1925). *Lives of eminent philosophers* (R.D. Hicks, Trans.), Vol. 2. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann. 7.106, pp. 211-213.

¹⁰⁶ Stobaeus' good definition in Anthology 2.5d p130: "They say that 'good' is used in many senses; the primary senses, which plays a role like that of a source (for the senses), is that which is stated as follows: that from which it characteristically results that one is benefited or he by whom (it results that one is benefited) (and what is good in the primary senses is the cause. The second sense is that in accordance with which it characteristically results that one is benefited." In addition to that Seneca's explanation of the good: "What is this good? I shall say: a free and upright mind, superior to other things and inferior to nothing." Letters on Ethics, text 124.12, p 194. When Diogenes Laertius defines virtue as a good he then clarifies good with these words: "Every good is advantageous and binding and profitable and useful and well used and honorable and beneficial and worth choosing and just."7.98

¹⁰⁷ Sellars, J. *Stoicism*. Chesham: Acumen Publishing, c2006. p. 110.

¹⁰⁸ Laertius, Diogenes (1925). *Lives of eminent philosophers* (R.D. Hicks, Trans.), Vol. 2. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann. 7.92-93. pp. 199-201.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*, p.115. In Diogenes' examples and explanations about virtue/virtuous act, 'choosing neither, avoiding neither' part's objects are called indifferents and this concept of Stoicism will be handled as a topic and explained in the next topic.

The point here is to show that virtue is all about knowledge. The soul is lightened by virtue, and virtue's battery is knowledge. When vice takes the stage, the soul suffocates in the dark, because it is drifting away from rationality which is a part of god. When rationality is lost, according to the stoics, the soul will be sick. Therefore, it is clear that one requirement of happiness is knowledge, which is the mode of virtue.

4.4 Knowledge and Problem of Externals

According to Stoicism, knowledge begins with sense impressions. With regard to the Stoic view, it has already been established that virtue is good and nothing outside of it can be labeled as good. Therefore, the externals are called evil for humans. Sellars explains the Stoic view on this labeling of externals in three ways:

We are rational beings by nature, so the only thing that is good for us is that which preserves us a rational beings and this will be virtue. External things cannot be inherently good because they can also be used for bad ends. Possession of externals cannot guarantee us happiness, but possession of virtue can.¹¹⁰

The problem of externals is the main issue of discussion in Stoicism. According to the philosophers of this area, external things have no bonds with happiness on the contrary of virtue. Our fatal error is seeking out happiness outside of virtue's scope. Tad Brennan provides an example of this attitude: we seek happiness in such a way that we believe a car will bring us the happiness.¹¹¹ However, the Stoics do not find happiness in externals; their happiness goes hand in hand with moral acts, virtue, and reason. Only by means of virtue and its forms, namely knowledge, can one be happy. Since our knowledge begins with particular senses, the problems of the senses will be there as well, from the beginning. In the first step we get impressions (*phantasia*)

¹¹⁰ Sellars, J. *Stoicism*. Chesham: Acumen Publishing, c2006. p. 111.

¹¹¹ Brennan, T. *The Stoic life: emotions, duties, and fate*. Oxford Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 96.

involuntarily. In other words, these mental impressions are not in our control. Anthony Arthur Long declares that imagined impressions are received by senses perpetually. If someone has a hesitation about the world, these mental impressions will be the disproof of this person's denial. However, Long suggests that they are not the exact truth of the world, and they are classified as 'appearances'.¹¹² With respect to truth, *phantasia* may be realistic or the reverse. While *phantasia* are received by us, this process happens without our control. Aristotle explains *involuntary* in his *On the Movement of Animals* book with these words:

Some of their parts, however, undergo certain involuntary movements, though most of these are really non-voluntary. By involuntary I mean such movements as those of the heart and of the privy member, which are often moved by presentation of some image and not at the bidding of reason. By non-voluntary I mean sleeping, waking and respiration and the like. For neither imagination nor desire is strictly speaking responsible for any of these movements.¹¹³

This quotation points out, by referring to *involuntary* and *not voluntary* actions, that the control over or responsibility for the impressions is not in the hands of the human being. The second phase includes or starts with assent. As the Stoic doctrine says, the assent occurs in us; the mind makes judgments about its impressions. Impressions' immediate content gives way to the mind's control. In the last step, impulses takes over control from mind and reason cannot prevent this action. Here because of reason's passivity, it cannot be known whether the action will be wrong or right, because impulses direct action in whichever way their tendencies push. They are wrong evaluations of *phantasia*. It is legitimate to ask here how we survive these reactions and get to the reason at the top. We cannot, first of all, get rid of impressions—their existence cannot be denied and is not denied by the Stoics. Even if

¹¹² Long, A.A. *From Epicurus to Epictetus Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. p. 385.

¹¹³ Aristotle (2006). *Parts of Animals, Movement of Animals, Progression of Animals, Movement of Animals* (E. S. Forster, Trans.). Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England. Chapter: 11-703B, p. 477.

reason has been captured by these impressions, we still have the chance to eliminate them. For Margaret R. Graver¹¹⁴ it is possible to actualize this because human beings have the capacity to weaken these reactions by straightening out each others' concepts of values or studying others' consciences. Though this schema shows us that the faculty of reason is not in charge for the most part, the Stoic view claims that the false judgments, namely emotions, are totally in our control. Sellars' view on this issue is that emotions may be manifestations of our irrational part—poor reasoning, in other words—or composed of mistaken judgments; we can control them for the sake of leading a rational existence and we should control them.¹¹⁵ For the Stoics, emotions are judgments; instead of being 'mistaken components of the one's mind' they assert that they are in the scope of rational part. In addition to that, Long claims that "Emotions are activities of a uniformly rational mind because only a rational mind could be subject to human emotions. Indeed, they (the Stoics) insisted, only a rational mind can act irrationally, meaning commit errors of judgment."¹¹⁶

Emotion's cause lies in the impressions that we get in a good sense or in a bad sense, and after that in the way these impressions are interpreted by the mind. This categorization is also made by Zeno. He divides things that exist into good, bad and indifferent. Good things belong to virtue while bad things belong to vice. Indifferent things are everything that does not belong either to the good or the bad. Nothing outside of virtue can be really good, and nothing can be really bad outside the scope of vice; in other words, the things in the indifferent category that is placed between the virtues and vices are by definition false.¹¹⁷ The indifferent category of Stoicism

¹¹⁴ Graver, M. R. *Stoicism & emotion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. p. 132.

¹¹⁵ Sellars, J. *Stoicism*. Chesham: Acumen Publishing, c2006. p. 117.

¹¹⁶ Long, A.A. *From Epicurus to Epictetus Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. pp. 379-380.

¹¹⁷ Brennan, T. *The Stoic life: emotions, duties, and fate*. Oxford Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 89.

include as fame, high-social status or low-social status, possessions, money or poverty, reputation and so on. In addition to that Zeno divides indifferent things into two subcategories as Cicero declares in his book *Academica*:

All other things he (Zeno) divided into three classes, some were in accordance with nature, some at discord with nature, and some were *neutral*. To the first class he assigned a positive value, and called them 'preferred' to the second a negative value and called them 'rejected', to the third no value whatever--mere verbal alterations on the old scheme. Though the terms right action and sin belong only to virtue and vice, he thought there was an appropriate action (*officium*) and an inappropriate, which concerned things 'preferred',¹¹⁸ and things 'rejected',^{119, 120}.

Many different kinds of external objects exist, which are named as indifferent by the Stoics or by Zeno as *neutral*, and these traits or characteristics give direction to a person's behavior in relation to them. These indifferent things - whether preferred or non-preferred - are called passions (*pathos*) in Stoic understanding. The judgments depend on the emotions. If these judgments are made in the wrong way, they turn into something else, namely passions. This happens when we act as if the things, which are mentally out of our control, are good or evil for us regardless of whether they are absolutely good or bad. This guarantees our extreme reaction to things such as fame, political power, etc. In order to have a good life, we have to stay away from our passions because they bring difficulties and harm into our lives. Our well-being is destroyed by *pathos*' existence in the Stoic view. In order to depict this harm in a more detailed way, Seneca, in *Moral Letters to Lucilius*, imagines passions as like *diseases*:

... the diseases are hardened and chronic vices, such as greed and ambition; they have enfolded the mind in too close a grip, and have begun to be permanent evils thereof. To give a brief definition: by 'disease' we mean a persistent perversion of the judgment, so that things which are mildly desirable are thought to be highly desirable. Or, if you prefer, we may define it thus: to be too zealous in striving for

¹¹⁸ Preferred indifferent things such as health and wealth.

¹¹⁹ Rejected or non-preferred things like sickness and poverty.

¹²⁰ Cicero, M.T. (1871, 2011). *Academica of Cicero* (J.S. Reid, Trans.). London: Macmillan and Co. p. 109.

things which are only mildly desirable or not desirable at all, or to value highly things which ought to be valued but slightly or valued not at all.¹²¹

However, the passions, such as wrath, avarice or jealousy, are active in our daily lives, and it does not seem easy to keep away from them. These are still the misjudgments of the mind and these errors do not befall us. One creates them; again one misjudges the impressions, and in the end one gets diverted onto the wrong course. Most of the time people try to get away from passions' results. The Stoic perspective on passions denies that people are not responsible for their wrath or jealousy. The attitude displayed in the way we face situations and the position that we take against them in our lives, determines our character; or in other words attitudes are the reflections of our souls. One cannot eliminate the liability of *pathos*. As Long claims, "We are as responsible for emotions as we are for anything that we do, because what is at stake in our emotions is the one thing over which we supposedly have or could have complete control: our mental outlook on the world."¹²² Yet, there is no room for pessimism in Stoicism. Even if these harmful parts cannot be removed, one still has the chance of having a healthy soul. Not surprisingly, for Stoicism, the solution is in within the problem. The key is concentrating ourselves only on good things, and making judgments in keeping with this tendency. However, this action brings one more step; while we are focusing on the good things—on virtue—we should see other things as indifferent. With these thoughts and actions a healthy soul's ground is constituted from here.

¹²¹ Inwood, B. & Gerson P.L. *The Stoics reader: selected writings and testimonia*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co., Inc., 2008. Seneca, Moral Letters to Lucilius, p. 143.

¹²² Brennan, T. *The Stoic life: emotions, duties, and fate*. Oxford Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 380. For Nussbaum (p 325): "Stoic reasoning does not exclude (in principle) emotion: emotions are housed in the soul's rational part, and are criticized not for being non-cognitive, but for being false."

4.5 Sage Man

While one must struggle to rid oneself of passions, the Stoic philosophy makes space for a person who is free from passions altogether, namely *the sage*. The sage never fails when it comes to the passions. There is a common view regarding the sage held by Stoic philosophers and also in many commentaries on Stoicism: It holds that if we take philosophy as an *art of living*, and the wise person commits his own self to this road, then this person will be infallible when it comes to withstanding the passions. Yet, the wise one still can have powerful feelings, such as joy. One might ask, if the wise man can have deep joy in life, then what is the difference between the non-wise person and the sage? Even if the wise person's judgments—and thus actions—do not arise from diseases of the soul, this person is nonetheless under the effects of the passions; he or she can be the subject to sexual emotions or other passion types, just like those who are not wise. The difference between the sage and the non-wise man lies in his *responses* to passions. While the sage takes no action against these signals, the non-wise man responds and make judgments under the influence of the passions—and these are made irrationally. He acts upon the knowledge of what is good and bad, and his actions are in adjustment with virtue in accord with the light of reason. Cicero's words about the sage sum up the issue to us:

As pity is grief for another's adversity, so enviousness is grief for another's prosperity. He therefore who is liable to pity is liable also to envy. But the wise man is not liable to envy; therefore, not to pity. But were a wise man wont to feel grief, he would also be wont to feel pity. Therefore grief has no place with the wise man.¹²³

4.6 The Art of Living

Stoic thinkers are criticized by many philosophers and writers for their philosophy. The critics' common view is that the Stoic approach to happiness is not valid. They do not show how one can be happy. Julia Annas criticizes Stoicism's attitude to moral

¹²³ Cicero, Marcus Tullius (1886). *Tusculan Disputations* (A.P. Peabody, Trans.). Boston: Little, Brown, and Company Cambridge. p. 152.

actions. For the Stoics, moral acts are not just for individual but for the society too. Annas claims that, when even an individual cannot hold back the self from wrong actions, it is absurd to talk about that individual's role in society.¹²⁴ While she is insisting on relative inaccessibility accessibility of happiness, Brennan, on the other hand, emphasizes that the Stoics do explain that happiness is available for every single human being; however, no one can have a happy *life* except their divine person, the sage.¹²⁵

At some level, Annas seems very rightful making these objections. Human beings are always under the attack of impressions. Even though they have reason, which enables them to control themselves, gives them the power of choice, and makes them the leaders of their own lives, still they cannot get away from irrationality; they have false beliefs and make wrong judgments. From the point of view of the Stoics, happiness is not accessible for every human being. However, in the writings of these philosophers, all of them clearly state that they do not show the direct way to happiness¹²⁶. Rather, they try to find the answer of how one can be happy. Their philosophy is like continually progressing set of guidelines for achieving happiness. As human beings, we are all connected to each other through the unitary quality of cosmos; our actions affect all others mentally, physically and spiritually. We do give wrong decisions and behave unscrupulously; the vice is irrefutable in our life. However, for the Stoics, we are given a good nature from birth; they claim that the cosmos cannot be bad, and in fact nothing else can be more beautiful and good. Since our nature is good from birth, the bad and its manifestations are subsequent to the innate nature of human beings,

¹²⁴ Annas, Julia. *The morality of happiness*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. pp. 178-179.

¹²⁵ Brennan, T. *The Stoic life: emotions, duties, and fate*. Oxford Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 98.

¹²⁶ Nussbaum, Martha Craven. *The therapy of desire: theory and practice in Hellenistic ethics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996. p. 352.

bad must be eradicated by means of reason which, innate in our souls, makes good and thus happiness still possible. Even if Sellars admits that there are some Stoic sages who actually lived happily, like Cato the Younger or Diogenes¹²⁷, the happiness of Stoicism remains questionable and it must be added that if happiness does not seem available in this teaching, in the Stoic way of life one can still be as happy as he or she possibly can by using and acting on reason.

4.6.1 What is to be done?

The passions and their fragments should be extirpated from life because they are false judgments, and they pull us down and cause unhappiness. In addition to the passions, external things should be regarded as indifferent. Because they have no intrinsic value with respect to virtue, and since they lie outside of virtue, they must be treated with indifference, as the sage treats them. Living in accordance with one's nature, caring for our own souls' health like caring for our bodies', and by leading one's self with reason and focusing on the "up to us" part of life, we will be at least supporting progress toward happiness.

4.6.2 How do we do it?

The effort that drives this progress involves practical reasoning and making a habit out of it. Without practice, actions, behavior, and reason alone will be not enough for happiness. In this effort, philosophy offers the only guide. According to Andrew Fiala, while the Stoics talk about reason and making the chapters of what is in our power or not, it is philosophy that will teach us which way to go or choose.¹²⁸ When philosophy as an art of living shows us the ways, one has to act upon them. Without continually being put into practice and subject to examination, this system will fail, according to the Stoics' understanding of philosophy.

¹²⁷ Sellars, J. *Stoicism*. Chesham: Acumen Publishing, c2006. p. 39.

¹²⁸ Fiala, A. "Stoic Tolerance" *Res Publica* 9 (2003): p. 154.

4.7 Legacy; To and From

Even if Stoicism gets a lot of criticism and it is not seen as an active branch of philosophy in today's world, one has to give the Stoics credit for their impact on many significant philosophers. In the Stoic understanding of nature and the cosmos, we are impartible and we all share the same nature; the faculty of reason—located in our souls—binds us together. Reason is always concerned with the good and it is always pointing out that what is good for individuals and thus society, good which is inherent in the cosmos' structure. Human beings have to act upon morality by practical reasoning for the benefit of society and for their souls' sake. What is good and beneficial for the order of the society is justice. Our nature is good and it insists on laws; we have these laws inherent in our souls, and so also have a tendency toward justice.

For the Stoics, passions are responsible for corrupting the soul, and one therefore has to get rid of them for the sake of happiness. Human beings have reason and thus have control over their passions. We should act upon what is in our power in order to arrive at a virtuous and have a happy life, because virtue lies in the knowledge of good and evil, and happiness is the highest good. The 'not-up-to-us' will pull down the soul's rationality and tranquility. Therefore, the focus should be on the things up-to-us, and one has to extirpate passions which are not in our control, and ultimately as harmful to our nature as a disease. This extirpation is possible within the light of reason by using it in a correct and practical way. A 17th century philosopher, Descartes offers a partial impression about the Stoic's view about reason and passion:

... (one) should bear in mind that while he thus guides himself as far as he can, by reason, all the good things which he does not possess are one and all entirely outside his power. In his way he will become accustomed not to desire them... virtue by itself is sufficient to make us content in this life... The right use of reason, by giving a true knowledge of the good, prevents virtue from being false; by accommodating it

to licit pleasures, it makes virtue easy to practice; and by making us recognize the condition of our nature, it sets bounds to our desires.¹²⁹

Descartes, like the Stoics, accepts virtue's sufficiency and also the effective and necessary role of reason in human life. However, he does not suggest that we should eradicate passions. He completes his explanation by noting that there are passions that are useful, necessary and good for humans; and that the ones that are harmful can be controlled by reason—by reason their harm can be inhibited.¹³⁰

It will be useful to talk about the Stoicism's roots in the understanding of philosophy. In fact, the following will be a short explanation of their influences and their roots, since—significantly—the Stoics call themselves The Socratics. Living virtuously for the sake of happiness; acting benevolently according to the good; the methods of analysis and philosophy's key role in this investigation are admired, appreciated, accepted and followed, and are all attributed to Socrates' philosophy¹³¹ by the Stoics. The most vivid and concrete voice of Socrates can be grasped in Epictetus, and he accepts the primary importance of Socrates in his work with an open-heart. In the next chapter, on Epictetus' philosophy and understanding of the external, we will see that both are shaped by Socrates' dialogues about pleasure which we have discussed in the previous chapters.

¹²⁹ Descartes, Rene (1991). *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* Vol III, (J.Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, A. Kenny, Trans.). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 258.

¹³⁰ Descartes explains the passion which is named as generosity, and adds that it is the head of our virtuous acts and it is the right usage of reason. (*The Passions of the Soul*, Article 161, p. 109, Article 153, p. 104).

¹³¹ For more detailed information see Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 5

A STOIC MORALIST WITH SOCRATIC MARKS: EPICTETUS

Epictetus is a Stoic thinker whose teachings have come to be known from the writings of Flavius Arrian. The dates of his birth and death are unknown, but it is a known fact that he was born in Hierapolis of Phrygia as a slave of Epithrodizus, a sectarian of Nero. Epictetus was a student of a Stoic teacher, namely Musonius Rufus, according to William Abbott Oldfather.¹³² Unlike his Stoic predecessors, he was not a cultured, powerful or rich person, and like Seneca he did not strive for the acquisition of these qualities.¹³³ Epictetus believed that the only thing one needs and will need in life is already given by nature.¹³⁴ Like his Stoic predecessors, his thoughts are about a moral life which both includes and constitutes happiness.

The Stoics claim that the emotions are false evaluations of our external impressions which direct our actions. The Stoics argued that *phantasia* comprise the things coming from outside and emotion-based judgments or interpretations formed by humans deluded by these external things. Epictetus does not believe that good things lie in the externals; we cannot achieve a healthy soul or a good life through external concerns, such as the body and its needs. He uses an interesting analogy to illuminate this issue:

¹³² Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. pp. vii, ix, xii.

¹³³ *ibid*, p. xvii.

¹³⁴ Long, A.A. *Epictetus: a Stoic and Socratic guide to life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. p. 17.

goodness does not come from bodily needs, like snail's goodness is not in its shell.¹³⁵ Since no benefit can come from externality or passions – such as anger, jealousy, satisfaction, pity, dread, and the like - we should not pay attention to them, and instead we should move forward according to the faculty of reason. Epictetus suggests that we can get rid of, or direct, or at least minimize our passions. This is related to our will or power, which declare that human beings must be free from passions. This kind of power is in common with god. The other claim that supports the idea of having common features with god concerns in what ways the system of the workings of the mind. While one's mind is composed of external impressions, reason is not composed of absolute *phantasia* in incidental way. In order to be a system, the mind has to partake in god.

...we have given thee a certain portion of our self, this faculty of choice and refusal, of desire and aversion, or in a word, the faculty which makes use of external impressions; if thou care for this and place all that thou hast therein, thou shalt never be thwarted, never hampered, shalt not groan, shalt not blame, shalt not flatter any man.¹³⁶

In Epictetus' philosophy, the common quotation that has been used by other philosophers or edited by writers is the *tyrant* example. Even if a person does not agree with the tyrant's wish, that person must do or act upon the tyrant's words during a period of tyranny. This is because the tyrant is the ruler, and if one does not apply his words, one will lose one's life. Epictetus sees this contradiction and suggests that our acts or positions should be grounded in virtues.¹³⁷ If the tyrant's words are against the virtues or our understanding of *good* and leads us to the wrong, we should not

¹³⁵ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 1.20, p. 139.

¹³⁶ *ibid*, p. 11.

¹³⁷ *ibid*, p. 19.

leave the scope of rationality even if our life will be taken. The tyrant's demand throws a monkey wrench into something that is going well; on one hand life is threatened, and on the other hand something more important than the life itself is at stake—the possibility of losing humanity, and of losing rationality which is a portion of god. In Epictetus' philosophy, one should choose virtuous actions because, in life, what really matters is being a rational and virtuous entity. Because we are rational entities, we have the power of ridding our souls of passions. Because god gave humans rationality - unlike the other beings - to think, evaluate, question, understand, and so on. We should act upon these principles during our lives. We should live like rational beings, not like irrational beings:

You will, indeed, find many things in man only, but you will also find many possessed by us in common with the irrational animals. (...) God had need of animals in that they make use of external impressions, and of us in that we understand the use of external impressions. And so for them its sufficient to eat and drink and rest and procreate, and whatever else of things within their own province the animals severally do: while for us, to whom He has made the additional gift of the faculty of understating, these things are no longer sufficient, but unless we act appropriately, and methodically, an in conformity each with his own nature and constitution, we shall no longer achieve our own ends. (...) it is shameful for man to begin and just where the irrational animals do.¹³⁸

However, even if human beings each have a portion god, there are still problems. We cannot totally get rid of our passions. Impressions come to us through our senses, involuntarily and continually, and the faculty of reason cannot prevent the existence of impressions. In other words, the mind or reason does not direct these outcomes. As a result of that, in Epictetus' statement, sharing common ground with god does not really provide the solution for eliminating passions. What we do have under our control are our judgments. Impressions can befall us, but rationality given by god provides us with the faculty of making choices about the externals that we face. In

¹³⁸ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 1.6, pp. 45-46.

Epictetus' philosophy this characteristic image of the mind entitles us to *what is up to us*. As rational entities, humans have desires and passions congenitally. Though these features' existence may not be under our control, the judgments and the actions that we take against them are totally in our power. So we are not completely under possession of our emotions if we can avail ourselves of Epictetus' phrase *up to us*.¹³⁹

Some things are under control, while others are not under our control. Under our control are conception, choice, desire, aversion, and, in a word, everything that is our own doing; not under our control are our body, our property, reputation, office, and in a word, everything that is not our own doing. Furthermore, the things under our control are by nature free, unhindered, and unimpeded; while the things not under our control are weak, servile, subject to hindrance, and not our own. Remember, therefore, that if what is naturally slavish you think to be free, and what is not your own to be your own, you will be hampered.... while if you think only what is your own to be your own, and what is not your own to be, as it really is, not your own, then no one will ever be able to exert compulsion upon you, no one will hinder you, no one will harm you, for neither is there any harm that can touch you.¹⁴⁰

A human being's eventual goal in life is to reach tranquility by not being affected by externals. For Epictetus, this road is available only by eradicating passions or neutralizing them. Still, Epictetus' philosophy does not suggest that we should be out of the scope of worldly issues. What he means is that by quitting passions, we should act upon our own natures. If one follows one's nature, this will mean that one is not acting contrary to his reason. By activating reason we can be away from passions, the afflictive and destructive results of external impressions. As a result of this, one will save oneself and be free in one's life. These steps are called moral actions, and every human being must follow these kinds of actions according to the requirements of nature. Reason is a godly faculty, and we should organize our selves and actions

¹³⁹ Long, A.A. *From Epicurus to Epictetus Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. p. 386.

¹⁴⁰ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. p. 483.

around it. External impressions befall us during every single moment of life, but the problem lies in assenting to them, which can be harmful to the soul if these passions or emotions are not ordered by reason. Leading by reason is a moral act which means choosing the right and the good. For Epictetus and most of the Stoics, this kind of living is made accessible by philosophy which is a medicine not only for our minds but also for our souls.

Epictetus' philosophy is based upon a moralist position. Like Socrates, he chose the dialogue form for philosophizing; unlike other Stoics he does not pay much attention to logical inquiries. His teachings are based on human nature. In his philosophy, all questions and problems which rise from human's nature are answered solely by inquiring into human nature. Although Epictetus does not have a major role in modern times' philosophy, he is the one who will at least show a good, decent, delicate, logical and reasonable way to live life in a better way, and this offers a compelling reason for studying his philosophy, thoughts and teachings step-by-step.

5.1 Dialogues, Elenchus and a Didactic Teacher

The concepts life, virtue and happiness are linked to each other in Epictetus' teachings like they are in Socrates' philosophy. Before introducing his philosophy and Socrates' marks on his thoughts, it is necessary to look into the character of Epictetus as teacher and his teaching style—here Socrates' foot prints are easy to catch. First of all, Epictetus maintained a didactic role towards his students. By giving examples, asking questions and refuting the answers when they do not sound logical. At first glance, *the Discourses* represent an entirely Socratic manner of writing. In the lessons of Epictetus, the dialogues between Epictetus and his students, which represent a Socratic style, drive Epictetus' teaching of his philosophy. For example; in *Philebus*, while Socrates and Protarchus are talking about pleasures, Socrates says 'Well, then, let us take this under consideration, all the more because of its obscurity; then we can

more readily understand the mixture of pain and pleasure in other cases.”¹⁴¹ After that Socrates, starts to ask questions to his interlocutor and move on into the dialogue. Another Socratic feature of Epictetus in his dialogues is that he is a didactic teacher. Long claims that Epictetus is here a Zeno-like character:

There are two reasons why Epictetus assigns the 'didactic and doctrinal chair' to Zeno. First, all Stoics looked back to Zeno as their philosophy's founder. So it is natural for Epictetus to tie Zeno's name to the style appropriate to expounding Stoicism. Secondly, unlike Chrysippus or any other leading Stoic with the partial exception of Cleanthes, Zeno was hallowed as much for his exemplary character as for his doctrinal authority.¹⁴²

While acknowledging Long's observation, it is necessary to see the influence of Socrates in Epictetus' didacticism. The reason for labeling Epictetus as Socratic here is that Socrates tries to teach his friends and other people the mistakes that they are making and the wrong ideas that they hold and think of as true. This protreptical feature directs us to the feature of *elenchus* in Epictetus' dialogues. Epictetus tries to show inconsistencies within the judgments of his students by using *elenchus*. Socrates himself is a role model for *elenchus* according to Epictetus: 'God counseled Socrates to take the office of examining and confuting men'¹⁴³. Even though Epictetus is criticized for his non-practically-applicable philosophy regarding happiness, Malcolm Schofield thinks that the usage of *elenchus* in *the Discourses* is valid, because as rational beings we are capable of understanding what is good and bad and we can grasp the inconsistencies within and between judgments.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Plato (1925, 1990). *Statesman-Philebus-Ion* (W. R. M. Lamb, Trans.). Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press. 48b, p.78-79.

¹⁴² Long, A.A. *Epictetus: a Stoic and Socratic guide to life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. p. 57.

¹⁴³ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses Books III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 3, 21.14-21, p. 129.

¹⁴⁴ Schofield, M. "Critical Studies Epictetus: Socratic, Cynic, Stoic" *The Philosophical Quarterly* 54.216 (2004): p. 451.

For Rodrigo S. Braicovich, Epictetus' aim in *the Discourses* is to reveal his students' delusional and wrong thoughts about happiness, to help and guide them for their 'personal salvation'¹⁴⁵. For Epictetus, this personal salvation can only be done through speech while examining oneself and this is the model that Socrates provides in his philosophy. In the *Apology*, Socrates says that a life is not worthy unless it is examined¹⁴⁶. Below are several examples of didactic sound and elenctic usage in *the Discourses*:

Now every rational soul is by nature offended by contradiction; and so, as long as a man does not understand that he is involved in contradiction, there is nothing to prevent him from doing contradictory things, but when he has come to understand the contradiction, he must of necessity abandon and avoid it, just as a bitter necessity compels a man to renounce the false when he perceives that it is false; but as long as the falsehood does not appear, he assents to it as the truth...¹⁴⁷

For Socrates knew what moves a rational soul, and that like the beam of a balance it will incline, whether you wish or no. Point out to the rational governing faculty a contradiction and it will desist; but if you do not point it out, blame yourself rather than the man who will not be persuaded.¹⁴⁸

In the next topic, Epictetus' didactic teachings will be studied with reference to moral purpose, the problem of external impressions, the three fields of the study, the problem of externals, and the philosopher's task.

5.2 Moral Purpose

What is it that attends to everything? Moral purpose. What is it that destroys the whole man, sometimes by hunger, sometimes by a noose, sometimes by hurling him over a cliff? Moral purpose. Is there, then, anything stronger than this among men?

¹⁴⁵ Braicovich, Rodrigo S. "On Some Rhetorical-pedagogical Strategies in Epictetus' Discourses Concerning Proairesis" *Eidos: Revista de Filosofía*. 19 (2013): p. 42.

¹⁴⁶ See p. 8.

¹⁴⁷ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 2.26, p. 423.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*, p. 425.

Yet how can the things that are subject to hindrance be stronger than that which is unhindered? What are by their very nature capable of hindering the faculty of vision? Both moral purpose and things that lie outside its sphere. The same hinder vision; and so it is also with speech. But what is by its very nature capable of hindering moral purpose? Nothing that lies outside its sphere, but only itself when perverted. For this reason moral purpose becomes the only vice, or the only virtue.¹⁴⁹

For Epictetus, by nature human beings are given the knowledge of what is good and what is evil. He accepts the preconceptions in human nature which are given by Zeus. When a person meets a difficult situation and struggles over what to do, or cannot decide how to act, that person has in fact one thing to do: to turn his or her mind to god. For him, Zeus gave us valid preconceptions of the good and the bad,¹⁵⁰ and he also gave us the capacity of understanding the difference between them. At this point, Epictetus sounds again like Socrates in saying that the knowledge of the good and of evil are within us; this is given and we recollect the knowledge by exercising this knowledge as is shown in *Memorabilia*¹⁵¹. However, Epictetus does not create a realm in which these preconceptions' source can be located, as the Platonic Socrates did. For him, they are bestowed by God. They are in our minds, and one has to follow this knowledge. This requirement follows from the purpose of being moral creatures. The moral purpose is a key to happiness which shows us the way of being virtuous. While the moral purpose is a combination of the signs about good and evil, for Epictetus there is a third area called "indifferents," which form the basis of his philosophy, and these lie outside the scope of moral purpose. Epictetus describes the good, the bad and the indifferent as follows: "Of things some are good, others bad, and yet others indifferent. Now the virtues and everything that shares in them are good, while vices

¹⁴⁹ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 2.11, p. 277.

¹⁵⁰ Epictetus gives definitions of these concepts in *Discourses* 4th book, 1.128-133, p. 289: "...that things righteous and excellent were good, things unrighteous and disgraceful bad."

¹⁵¹ It has been also told in pp. 15-16, in the *Oeconomicus* of Xenophon, one can know farming only by doing things that are related to the farming.

and everything that shares in vice are evil, and what falls in between these, namely, wealth, life, death, pleasures, pain, are indifferent.”¹⁵² In order to be moral entities, one’s actions must be in the sphere of moral purpose and if the indifferent things, as Epictetus called, are out of moral purpose, one should not follow them¹⁵³.

If a person rules his or her own self by reason and not by his or her pleasures, pains, or wealth—that is, indifferent things—then he or she will be a master of him or herself. On the other hand, if one arranges one’s own life in accordance with the things that will give pleasure to him or her, then that person’s life will fall outside of moral purpose. The moral purpose does not push people’s minds to think about how to be rich more or how to become popular among other people. These deluded purposes will take a person’s soul away from the sphere of moral purpose and this will obstruct the way to happiness. Happiness comes with virtuous actions, and the virtue belongs to the realm of morality. Since the indifferent category is outside the scope of moral purpose, Epictetus thinks that one has to avoid or destroy its attractions.

There is no better example than the life of Diogenes to clarify Epictetus’ thoughts about the realm of freedom. As a matter of fact, Diogenes’ life is a perfect way of understanding the concept of indifference while investigating freedom in Epictetus’ teachings. According to Laertius’ writings, the banishment of Diogenes resulted from his father counterfeiting coins while he was working for the state bank. While both the father and son were exiled from the city, the father died in prison but the son escaped and was captivated by pirates on the road of Aegina. The son who succeeded in escaping from banishment, Diogenes, was now in a bazaar of slaves. However, Epictetus thinks that being a slave did not turn Diogenes into a slave; in fact the only

¹⁵² Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 2.19, p. 355.

¹⁵³ The classification of the good things, the bad things and the indifferent things is also made by the Stoics which is expounded in Chapter 3, pp. 37-38.

free man that could ever be showed as a model is Diogenes for him.¹⁵⁴ Because money, fame, power and so-called pleasures were not his governing principle, he lived upon the things which are in his control:

He (Antisthenes) taught me what was mine, and what was not mine. Property is not mine; kinsmen, members of my household, friends, reputation, familiar places, converse with men—all these are not my own. ‘What, then, is yours? Power to deal with external impressions.’ He showed me that I possess this beyond all hindrance and constraint; no one can hamper me; no one can force me to deal with them otherwise than as I will... For the man who is destined to be overpowered by a man must long before that have been overpowered by things.¹⁵⁵

The crucial point in here is to know what is up to me and what is not up to me, and afterwards to act in accordance with this knowledge. All the things which are related to the bodily needs, as Diogenes pointed in the quotation above—kinsmen, friends, reputation etc.—are not mine and they will never be mine. Diogenes’ focus was always in the things which he has control over. This is the exact reason why he throws out his bowl when he sees a little boy who is drinking water by the means of his own hands.¹⁵⁶ Like Diogenes’ reaction in this very particular case, Epictetus suggests we exhibit attitudes towards passions like Diogenes’ reaction in this particular case. However, if one binds oneself to the externals, lives and rules one’s self according to the externals such as, power, money, and so on, and then one will be a slave to these things. That person’s existence will be for these kinds of ungovernable or uncontrollable nouns which can ever be given a possessive suffix by any human beings. While Braicovich examines Epictetus’ moral progress in his article, he says

¹⁵⁴ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses Books III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 4, 1-151-155, p. 297.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*, p. 207.

¹⁵⁶ Laertius, Diogenes (1925). *Lives of eminent philosophers* (R.D. Hicks, Trans.), Vol. 2. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann. pp. 37-39.

that the freedom of a person is at risk when that person is focusing on the externals.¹⁵⁷ In the approach of Epictetus' understanding of freedom, if the externals are in the lead role in human beings' lives, then people will find themselves in a circle of unhappiness which can lead them nowhere, because throughout their lifetimes these people will try to possess the things which they do not and will never have. In other words, these things that people want to have for their own are the ones that are not and will be not in their control. They are in a competition and they will be always among the ranks of losers on the path of happiness. Epictetus repeats over and over in all of his four documented dialogues that people who yearn for the things they do not have under their control are far away from freedom and doomed to slavery and unhappiness. He warns his students about the possessions with his didactic voice and advises them that the loss begins with the ownership and gives them an aphorism about the things that belong to their control:

For, mark you, stop admiring your clothes, and you are not angry at the man who steals them; stop admiring your wife's beauty, and you are not angry at her adulterer. Know that a thief or an adulterer has no place among the things that are your own, but only among the things that are another's and that are not under your control. If you give these things up and count them as nothing, at whom have you still ground to feel angry? But so long as you admire these things, be angry at yourself and not at the men that I have just mentioned.¹⁵⁸

For the ones who define themselves by their properties, fame, wealth, physical appearances are nothing but the slaves—the real slaves—in Epictetus' reckoning. For these things which are out of the moral purposes are corruptible, yet no one can dare

¹⁵⁷ Braicovich, Rodrigo S. "On Some Rhetorical-pedagogical Strategies in Epictetus' Discourses Concerning Proairesis" *Eidos: Revista de Filosofía*. 19 (2013): p. 49.

¹⁵⁸ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 1.18, p. 123.

to touch the moral purpose itself.¹⁵⁹ For Epictetus, even if a tyrant wants to chain someone from his leg, that person should not moan or be upset about this. The tyrant can touch his paltry body but cannot reach any closer to that person's moral values. As sons of Zeus, human beings are not slaves; naturally they born free. Therefore, the tyrant's chain is an insignificant case for Epictetus.¹⁶⁰ If one chains one's self with the things that are outside of moral purpose and not under own control, this will be the end of this person's freedom and happiness.

5.3 Problem of External Impressions

The essence of good is a certain kind of moral purpose, and that of the evil is a certain kind of moral purpose. What, then, are the external things? They are materials for the moral purpose, in dealing with which it will find its own proper good or evil. How will it find the good? If it does not admire the materials. For the judgments about the materials, if they be correct, make the moral purpose good, but if they be crooked and awry, they make it evil.¹⁶¹

In the third chapter, the problem of externals is explained broadly. Epictetus in this topic holds similar ideas, arguing that by externals happiness cannot be achieved. Though the impressions of externals may befall us every single moment, the interpretations of them and the judgments we make about them are under our own control. Therefore, the necessary point is to replace the judgments made in accordance with externals with judgments made within in the circle of moral purpose. Regarding the soul, Epictetus shares basic ideas with Socrates. It plays a major role in his philosophy. If happiness is at stake, then judgments must not be shaped by external impressions. In this case, the soul will be disturbed and harmed by choices which lie

¹⁵⁹ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. p. 13.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*, p. 129.

¹⁶¹ *ibid*, pp. 183-185.

outside of its own moral purpose. Here is an illustration made by Epictetus himself in order to explain the damage made by externals to the soul:

The soul is something like a bowl of water, and the external impressions something like the ray of light that falls upon the water. Now when the water is disturbed, it looks as though the ray of light is disturbed too, but it is not disturbed. And so, therefore, when a man has an attack of vertigo, it is not the arts and the virtues that are thrown into confusion, but the spirit in which they exist; and when this grows steady again, so do they too.¹⁶²

5.4 Three Fields of Study

For the person who wants to be good and noble, Epictetus suggests three ways to study. In the first place, one has to consider the topic of desires and aversions. When judgments are made in accordance with them, the moral purpose is lost. In other words, if one's judgments depend on the anger, pity, reputation, power, rage, envy, and all the other things that are not related to the moral purposes, then it is easy to say for Epictetus that one is not making any progress toward being a good person; in fact, such a person has become a slave of passions, and consequently happiness is out of bounds for that person. These passions are fatal for one's soul because they act as obstacles to using reason. Though everyone has preconceptions about the good and the evil, they make errors in judgment, influenced by external impressions. As a result of this, the passions flourish and take the leadership role in guiding action. For Epictetus, every kind of passion is harmful, and judgments have to be arranged on the basis of moral purposes: "You must utterly wipe out desire, and must turn your aversion toward the things which lie within the province of the moral purpose, and these only; you must feel no anger, no rage, no envy, no pity; no wench must look fine to you, no petty reputation, no boy-favorite, no little sweet-cake."¹⁶³ The passions

¹⁶² Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses Books III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 3, 3.17, p. 35.

¹⁶³ *ibid*, p. 135.

push one's soul into turmoil. One always wants something from life; all the efforts are made just for a temporary end and when people cannot get what they want, they cry and they suffer for the temporary endings. It is not a shocking result that these kinds of people are not regarded as happy by Epictetus. Even if they get what they want, e.g. a beautiful car, a higher degree in college or at work, a higher salary, power in society, being an actor or actress, or so on, there are two possible cases that can result. The first one is that their passion directly moves on to another thing, probably the thing which has higher quality what they have, and they are still acting miserable in Epictetus' view because what they have is not theirs and will never be. The other possibility is that they will lose what they have and for Epictetus they are again the miserable because they are not recognizing that they never had what they thought they had. This is an endless circle; a circle that can lead only to damaging the soul. Braicovich summarizes Epictetus' thoughts on the soul thus:

The functions of a soul are the exercise of choice, of refusal, of desire, of aversion, of preparation, of purpose, and of assent. What, then, can that be which makes the soul dirty and unclean in these functions? Nothing but its erroneous decisions. It follows, therefore, that impurity of a soul consists of bad judgments, and purification consists in creating within it the proper kind of judgments.¹⁶⁴

All sorts of passions are wrong for Epictetus, and they are the starting point of calamities for humanity. Because of that, people should not conduct their own selves and lives with passion; rather, the leading role in a good soul belongs to the reason and intelligence which are the human being's true nature. Reaching this point, our duty is to arrange the external impressions with respect to nature¹⁶⁵ and in our nature there is kinship with god. The god-like part of the human being is reason, which god gave to humanity. The superiority of human beings to other creatures or entities lies in

¹⁶⁴ Braicovich, Rodrigo S. "Freedom and Determinism in Epictetus' Discourses" *The Classical Quarterly*. 60.01 (2010): p. 214.

¹⁶⁵ Epictetus uses these words when he draws a picture of a good man and his duties in book 3, 2.17, p. 29

this rational part. One cannot stop the external impression but one can make a *rational use of it*.¹⁶⁶ Epictetus, in the *Encheiridion*, claims that the use of external impressions is under our control:

Be not elated at any excellence which is not your own. If the horse in his elation were to say "I am beautiful", it could be endured; but when you say in your elation, "I have a beautiful horse," rest assured that you are elated at something good which belongs to a horse. What, then you're your own? The use of external impressions. Therefore, when you are in harmony with nature in the use of external impressions, then be elated; for then it will be some good of your own at which you will be elated.¹⁶⁷

The horse and its beauty is not a person's possession and if people are so worried about the beauty, they should be worried about their soul's beauty. Instead of making the body more beautiful, they need to beautify their soul by making correct judgments, using the reason faculty, arranging desires and aversion in accordance with the moral purposes. These claims are the same as Socrates'. In the *Symposium* of Xenophon, Socrates says that the beauty of the soul is more important than the beauty of the body:

Now affection on the part of those who feel admiration for character is commonly termed a pleasant and willing constraint; whereas many of those who have a merely physical concupiscence reprehend and detest the ways of those they love. But suppose they are satisfied on both scores ; yet the bloom of youth soon passes its prime, and as this disappears, affection also inevitably fades away as fast ; but the soul becomes more and more lovable the longer it progresses toward wisdom. Besides, in the enjoyment of physical beauty there is a point of surfeit, so that one cannot help feeling toward his favorite the same effect that he gets toward food by gratification of the appetite.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses Books III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 4,3.10, p. 313.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid*, p. 489.

¹⁶⁸ Xenophon (1923, 1997). *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium and Apology* (E.C. Marchant & O.J. Todd, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 8.13-16, pp. 615-617.

For Epictetus, God gave us the reason and intelligence and a person has to make them as his or her governing principle instead of passions, which are wrong judgments based on external impressions. If one is a so-called human being, one must behave like a human being:

...God has given us the faculty to comprehend these things and to follow the path of reason... If, indeed, I were a nightingale, I should be singing as a nightingale; if a swan, as a swan. But as it is, I am a rational being, therefore I must be singing hymns of praise to God. This is my task; I do it, and I will not desert this post, as long as it may be given me to fill it; and I exhort you to join me in this same song.¹⁶⁹

The second field of study is the application of the first study for social relationships. The first study focuses on the individuals. These individuals have to wipe out their passions, take control of desires and aversions and govern themselves in accordance with nature. It will not be enough if individuals do not remember their role in society. They have to know their position in society and since they cannot be separated from society, they have to do their part for what this kind of relation requires. It is an undeniable fact that people are inseparable from society. While they are embarking on a new course of study, they have to realize their position of indebtedness to the others—they are a part of the universe¹⁷⁰, without this connection they will be meaningless, not unlike in the case of a foot detached from the body. One of the foot's functions is maintaining balance to the body for walking and standing. If the foot is detached from the body, then the foot will no longer be a foot because it has lost its function.¹⁷¹ For Epictetus, the same scenario is valid for human beings since they are a part of society. According to Long, human beings' duty is firstly to their own selves,

¹⁶⁹ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 1.17, p. 111.

¹⁷⁰ Epictetus claims that human beings are the parts of the universe and sons of God, however; he does not touch on the cosmic structure as the other Stoics does. See pp. 47-49.

¹⁷¹ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 2.5, p. 241.

but Epictetus' second field reminds them of their social obligation in order to fulfill their intention to become good human beings:

...his (Epictetus) ethics is premised on the claim that we have to care first and foremost for our individual selves if we are to be properly equipped to do what is incumbent on us in our social roles. His educational principles, such as making correct use of our impressions, straddle both fields. What the second field indicates is that Epictetus' students require rigorous training in managing their day-to-day lives even after they have absorbed the truths about reconciling their desires and aversions with long-term freedom and tranquility. Hence the subjects of such discourses as those on friendship and family affection.¹⁷²

Below is a quotation from Epictetus which shows his ideas about the second field of study, and his attitudes toward the individual's place in social relations:

...we must remember who we are, and what is our designation, and must endeavor to direct our actions, in the performance of our duties, to meet the possibilities of our social relations. We must remember what is the proper time for song, the proper time for play, and in whose presence; also what will be out of place; lest our companions despise us, and we despise our-selves; when to jest, and whom to laugh at, and to what end to engage in social intercourse, and with whom; and, finally, how to maintain one's proper character in such social intercourse.¹⁷³

After dealing with desire and aversions, and applying themselves in the social relations of daily life in order to be citizens of the universe, the third field of study becomes important for people. This field can only become true if the other steps are fulfilled. For those who are successful in earlier fields, Epictetus congratulates them because these are not easy tasks to achieve. The third stage is about maintaining the attitudes which are the outcomes of the earlier steps by '...concentrating upon arguments which involve equivocal premises, which derive syllogisms by the process

¹⁷² Long, A.A. *Epictetus: a Stoic and Socratic guide to life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. p. 116.

¹⁷³ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses Books III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 4, 12.12-18, p. 427.

of interrogation, which involve hypothetical premises...'¹⁷⁴ According to Long, Epictetus' ideas of the third study are not explicitly shaped. On the one hand, he seems to follow other Stoics regarding logic; however, he does not talk with an open voice and heart about this, and yet he is also in favor of advanced logic.¹⁷⁵ While admitting Long's ideas about Epictetus' approaches in logic, for the third study one can interpret from the discourses that it is a key factor for becoming a good and excellent being for Epictetus, however even he himself admits the hardship of the other stages. It is a serious matter for a human being to deal with passions and control desires and aversions. Epictetus' third stage may be too ambiguous to offer any more explanation of his thoughts about logic, but, as Long suggested, the best thing to do is to focus the part concerning controlling the desires and aversions.¹⁷⁶ The next topic will be about how one will take a stand against the external impressions, which are the source of our desire and aversions.

5.5 Dealing with External Impressions

In the earlier topic, it has been stated that Epictetus accepts the difficulty of the first field, which lies in dealing with desire and aversion. In this topic, Epictetus' thoughts will guide us to deal with the externals. First of all, one needs to decide what to do, and upon this list the actions of that person will be shaped. If the aim is to become a good person and in the end to be happy, one has to make a to-do-list and examine it, train the self depending on the list's orders, and make habit of them. Knowing what is right to do and saying what is the right thing to do will not be enough.¹⁷⁷ It is not

¹⁷⁴ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses Books III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 3, 2.6, p. 23.

¹⁷⁵ Long, A.A. *Epictetus: a Stoic and Socratic guide to life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. pp. 115-116.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*, p. 118.

¹⁷⁷ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses Books III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 3, 21.3-10, p. 125.

sufficient for being a good, free, noble, tranquil and happy person. For happiness, in Epictetus' philosophy, there must be actions—we need to go into action:

“I wish to win an Olympic victory.” But consider the matters which come before that and those which follow after; and only when you have done that, then, if it profits you, put your hand to the task. You have to submit to discipline, follow a strict diet, give up sweet-cakes, train under compulsion, at a fixed hour, in heat or in cold; you must not drink cold, nor wine just whenever you feel like it; you must have turned yourself over to your trainer precisely as you would to a physician.¹⁷⁸

By taking control over the externals, staying on one's toes against the sense-impressions, we have to train ourselves in leading with reason and make habit of these things. If a person does not train him or herself against the passions, and if the eyes do not stay opened against the sense-impressions, then that person will make errors of judgment again and become a slave to the passions and external impressions. Therefore, one needs to exercise like a true athlete does and keep on training, because even if a true athlete wins the game, he or she will continue trainings.¹⁷⁹ One has to make these trainings into habits in order to deal with the constant onslaught of externality:

For since it is impossible without great and constant training to secure that our desire fail not to attain, and our aversion fall not into what it would avoid, be assured that, if you allow training to turn outwards, towards the things that are not in the realm of the moral purpose, you will have neither your desire successful in attaining what it would, nor your aversion successful in attaining what it would.¹⁸⁰

If a person is one day carried away by desire and aversions and in another day straining and exercising towards the sense-impressions, that person's soul cannot be

¹⁷⁸ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses Books III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. p. 101.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid*, p. 325.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid*, p. 83.

saved from damage which will be caused by the external-impressions. The training will be meaningless unless virtuous efforts become habits:

...and since habit is a powerful influence, when we have accustomed ourselves to employ desire and aversion only upon these externals, we must a contrary habit to counteract this habit, and where the very slippery nature of sense-impressions is in play, there we must set our training as a counteracting force.¹⁸¹

5.6 Philosopher's Task

Testing the impressions and doing this on a daily basis is the task of a philosopher for Epictetus. His voice is both Stoic and Socratic for saying that the task of philosophy is testing impressions and examining ourselves based on such tests. He thinks that the beginning of philosophy corresponds to the question of how to be good and noble human beings; it informs us regarding what to do and how to do it. Its aim is to show the appropriate things to do; which opinions are right and which are not; which acts are appropriate to do and which are not. It reveals the standard judgments towards impressions, and encourages us to examine and test them. Philosophy is an art of living like other Stoics accepted.¹⁸² It is an investigation of standardized judgments and their practices, and Epictetus characterizes this investigation—philosophy—in this way:

What subject has arisen that we wish to investigate? –Pleasure. Subject it to the standard, put it into the balance. Should the good be the sort of thing that we can properly have confidence and trust in? -It should. Can we properly have confidence, then, in something that is insecure? -No. Pleasure contains no element of security, does it? -No. Away with it, then, and throw it out of the balance, and drive it far away from the region of things good.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses Books III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. p. 83.

¹⁸² See pp. 57-59.

¹⁸³ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses as Reported By Arrian Books I-II* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Book 2.11, pp. 281-283.

Epictetus does not hesitate to warn his students that philosophy is not a way of assurance. In the first chapters of the Discourses, he warns them about their delusional thoughts and says that happiness does not come with the passions and pleasures. They must free their souls from these misjudged external impressions. They are sons of god, they born free; they should not make themselves slaves of external things. God gave them valid preconceptions about goodness and badness. They are rational beings who have to act in accordance with its requirements. They have to follow what nature says— that is to say, what the reason says. These sayings will always direct them to what is good for them. They have to focus on moral purpose for the sake of happiness. The moral purpose includes virtue and vice, good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate things. This purpose is high above everything. On the other hand, the things that are outside of this purpose should be treated as indifferent. The most important point about the indifferent is that the student must not arrange their actions based upon them. They have to wipe out desires and aversions not just for their internal states but also for developing appropriate actions as members of their societies. Then they need to be experts in the area of logic for the sake of developing their intellectual capacities. The last point that Epictetus makes is for those who pass all of the stages, who apply them correctly, and who train, exercise, and practice themselves accordingly. For Epictetus, only Socrates and Diogenes have fully adapted these rules and applied them. They followed reason; they did not let themselves into the hands of the passions. They think, act and live in accordance with nature. In here, we see the task of a philosopher as caring not only for philosophical texts but for life itself also; acting in accordance with nature, that is to say guarding one's self with reason against the external impressions which will eventually turn into passions. It is not easy to follow these steps, but the aim makes this effort worthy. For happiness is itself worth to try. Some says that Epictetus is not realistic about the happiness and that it is impossible to fulfill happiness, even if one tries to carry out his teachings that person will fail eventually. As an answer for this criticism, it will be sufficient to

quote Epictetus: “This is the way Socrates became what he was, by paying attention to nothing but his reason in everything that he encountered. And even if you are not yet a Socrates, still you ought to live as one who wishes to be a Socrates.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ Epictetus (2000). *The Discourses Books III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion* (W.A. Oldfather, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Encheiridion.51, p. 535.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In analyzing Epictetus' teachings about happiness and virtuous life, we come to the conclusion that his moralist approach to happiness involves a correlation between happiness and virtue. Without virtuous acts, happiness cannot be achieved. Thus in order to lead a virtuous life, one has to think and behave according to moral purposes. At this point, passions and pleasures are out of the scope of moral purposes and virtuous actions, because they are evil for human beings. The moral purpose shows the good things and the bad things, which are virtues and vices. On the road of happiness, only upon this knowledge can one behave and expect to get closer to the goal. Besides the categories of good and bad, there is another category, called indifferent, and it is outside the scope of moral purpose. This category includes anger, rage, envy, reputation, pity and all kinds of passions and pleasures. Since they are out of the sphere of moral purpose, no one should carry these loads on their souls for the sake happiness.

It can be clearly seen that Epictetus's views are shaped by the thoughts of Socrates and the Stoics. In order to represent Epictetus' philosophy, these two significant figures have to be studied. As a classical figure of this problematic topic, Socrates thinks that on the road to happiness, pleasures are the sicknesses of the soul, and they do not lead to virtuous actions. Whether their inseparability from human life is an undeniable fact, for happiness, one has to measure and treat pleasures by experiences.

In Chapter 3, in Plato's dialogues, Socratic approach to pleasures is scrutinized. In Chapter 2, I clarified the blurry thoughts about a split in the character or figure of Socrates by using different writer's dialogues and the historians. Even if no one can give a sharply edged character of Socrates, there are basic points which confirm the consistency of thoughts about pleasure for Socrates. Referring to shared ideas in Xenophon, Libanius, Aristophanes and Plato, we can see that Socrates does not include pleasures in the understanding of what is necessary for virtue and happiness. Having the knowledge of goodness and badness, and being a rational entity, makes humanity to have a capacity for thinking and doing right actions. Since we have these qualifications, happiness and virtuous life are possible—points which are totally accepted by both the Stoics and Epictetus.

In Chapter 4, Stoicism is described in general terms. In their view, every single human being has a particle from God, namely reason; and every single human being is a particle of the cosmos. Their understanding of happiness is a reflection of Socratic thought and it confirms the relation between virtuous life and happiness. One has to think and act according to what is the right or good thing to do, and this is an obligation not just for a person's individual state but also for the sake of society. We are all members of the cosmos; since every action has a potential effect on all others. The Stoics regard moral actions as a duty of human beings. At this point, although Epictetus also admits this duty as the Stoics do, he does not reflect on the cosmos. Rather, he just reminds his students that it is their duty to behave like rational men. These duties remind us what is in our control and what is not. In this view, the things that are outside of moral purpose, namely "the indifferent" category, are not under our control. As one tries to possess what is not under one's control, one will become its slave. For Epictetus, being enslaved by something or somebody is unacceptable. Epictetus defends the innate idea of freedom, and criticizes people who are the slaves of their passions and pleasures.

Stoicism in general accepts that we can make false decisions about external impressions and drift towards the things that are not under our control. For the Stoics, a rational mind can make irrational choices and judgments. Epictetus shares the same ideas, but he does not talk about irrational parts of human beings. For him, we are rational, our nature tells us to follow goodness, and by our godly part we can make correct judgments about what is ours and what is not. When we make wrong judgments and run after what is not ours, namely passions and pleasures, this will not be labeled as a virtuous act, and the absence of virtue gives birth to unhappiness. Epictetus does not push his students to the edge because he himself admits that this is a difficult task to follow. Nonetheless, he constantly reminds us that we should train, practice and be always on watch against the external impressions in order to not to fall into the control of passions, and not to let our souls to be exposed to vice.

Here I must point out that, by definition Epictetus' philosophy of happiness can be labeled as invalid. Since happiness is accepted as ultimate goal of humanity in his philosophy, by empirical outcomes, one cannot achieve this so-called universal and necessary state happiness. Though Epictetus' teachings cannot guarantee happiness, still it is a beneficial guideline for well-being of both people and society. One can be subjected of desire and hatred; life and death, health and sickness, pleasure and pain, prosperity and poverty, and so on. All of these are not good or bad things in themselves; however for Epictetus we must avoid or at least eliminate them. If a human being saves him or herself from these contradictions, he or she will reach the *apathia* (which means the condition of insensitivity), where one can gain peace, happiness and serenity. However, human beings cannot be separated from their desires. What makes our character—and our interests, and our fears—are our passions; people choose things according to what they like; according to what makes them feel good and satisfied. Moreover, in childhood, one is asked by parents or relatives about what one wants to be in the future. From early ages, we start to put targets according

to our passions and live for reaching them. Our dreams are built on our passions, and our delicate and dear purpose in this short life is making our dreams come true. In modern times we do live our lives upon virtue, either in our daily life or in our ideological life in cognitive understanding. Epictetus' purpose is to live virtuous life, and this kind of life consists in wanting, thinking, wishing and doing what is good. It can be hard to apply Epictetus' teachings, but the glamorous and shining side on this issue is that there is such a possibility, and this life deserves a chance for the realization of this possibility. Our efforts to achieve happiness by leading a virtuous life consist in a worthwhile self-examination.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY

Günümüzdeki mutluluk kavramının kullanılışı ve anlamı antik çağdaki anlayıştan farklıdır. Modern zamanın insanları mutluluğa dair materyalistik bir tutum içerisinde. Genellikle, bir bireyin mutluluğu sahip olduğu güce, mal veya mülke bağlı olarak belirlenir. Bir üniversite öğrencisinin mutluluğa dair tutumu incelenirse, ortaya çıkan sonuçlar kademeli olarak okuldan başarıyla mezun olup, ardına mükemmel maaşlı bir işe başlayıp süregidecek olan hayatını her bir gün daha da materyal varlıklar elde edip hayat standardını yükselme çabasıdır. Görüldüğü gibi bu bakış açısıyla ele alınan mutluluk kavramı gelip geçici statüsündedir. Sahip olunması istenen, sahip olunulması gerektiğini düşünülenlere erişilince mutluluk gerçekleşir ve yerini mutluluğu sağlayacak yeni hallere, amaçlara, isteklere, zevklere ve tutkulara devreder. Antik Yunan filozofları tarafından ise bu tanım radikal bir şekilde eleştirilmiştir, mutluluk zevk ve tutkularla bağıntılı gelip geçici bir hal değildir. Mutluluk ne sahip olunulan bir eşyayla gelecek ne de kaybedilen bir statü ile ortadan kalkacaktır.

Antik Yunan filozofları için mutluluk, *eudaimonia*, erdemli davranışlarla birlikte ele alınan ve insanın kendi doğasını gerçekleştirme, bir ömür boyunca devam eden ve ancak bu ömrün tamamlanmasıyla gerçekleşebilecek olandır. *Eudaimonia* üç ana fikirden oluşur. Bunlar birbirini zorunlu kılan fikirlerdir ve herhangi birinin eksikliğinde mutluluktan bahsedilemez. Mutluluğun bu üç adet içeriği şöyledir; o,

erdemli hareketler sonucunda ortaya ıkacaktır, bu eylemler rasyonel ilkelerle oluřturulmalıdır ve bir birey herhangi bir Őeyi eyleyken sadece kendisi iin deęil ierisinde bulunduęu toplumu dikkate alarak hareket etmelidir. Yunan dūřuncesinde, erdem, *arete*, mükemmellik fikrini ierir ve erdeme, bireyin zevk ve tutkuları öncülük edemez. Zevk ve tutkular, erdemli davranıřlara iletmeyeceęi iin ve erdemli davranıřlar olmadan mutluluktan bahsedilemeyeceęi iin, Antik Yunan filozofları zevk ve tutkulara karřı tutum sergilerler. Bu tez alıřmasında, kendimce zevk ve tutkuların, erdemli hareketlerle birebir geliřen mutluluk kavramından nasıl hari tutulduęunu öncelikle Antik Yunan filozofu Sokrates'i, onun dūřüncelerini takip eden ve geliřtiren Stoacı felsefeyi inceleyeceęim. Son olarak erdem ve mutluluk üzerine bu iki dūřünceyi benimsemiř ve yorumlamıř, didaktik bir öęretmen ve filozof olan Epiktetos'un mutlulukla alakalı felsefesi sergilenecektir. Bu dūřünceler arasında kanıksanamaz bir baęıntı olduęu iin öncelikle Sokrates tanıtılacaktır.

Epiktetos'un öęretilerini anlamak iin Sokratik felsefe ve Stoacı dūřüncenin tanıtılması gereklidir ancak bu tanıtımda ilk bařlık Sokrates olacaktır. Epiktetos'un kendisi de Sokratik dūřüncenin yolundan yürüdüęünü kabul etmiřtir. Aslında Epiktetos, mutluluk konusunda, günümüz diliyle bir "yařam kou" olarak deęerlendirilebilir. Kendisi hem mutluluęa dair yanılsamaları bize göstermekle kalmaz, üzerine mutluluęun nasıl gerekleřebileceęine dair somut örnekler vererek, mutluluęa giden yolu aydınlatır. Özgür ve rasyonel varlıklar olarak geldięimiz bu dünyada ruhumuza herhangi bir Őeyin zincir vuramayacaęını belirterek bařlayan felsefesi, tek vurulabilecek zincirin zevk ve tutkuların olduęu ve bu zincirin de tanrı tarafından verilen muhakeme yeteneęimizle ortadan kaldırılabilceęi ile devam eder. Eęer konu mutluluksa, kiři özgür bařladıęı bu hayatta hibir zaman ne zevklerinin ne de tutkularının kölesi olmalıdır. Erdemli davranıřlardan uzak tutan tutku ve zevklere göre hareket eden kiři, onların kölesi haline gelip mutluluęa hep uzak kalacaktır.

Mutluluk arayışında Antik Yunan düşünürlerinin lideri olan ve modern Batı felsefesi üzerinde büyük bir etkisi olan Sokrates, zamanının felsefe yönünü değiştirmiş, genelde evren üzerine olan konuşmaları insana çekmiş ve bilginin doğasına inerek epistemolojiyi öne çıkartmıştır. Onun diyaloglarındaki ana motif tartışılan konuda sunulan önermeleri, kavramları veya fikirleri test etme (*Elenchus*¹⁸⁵) değerlendirmedir ve bu felsefi tartışmalarda mantığın önemini vurgulamaktadır. Sokrates'in öğretilerinin ayrıntılarına girmeden önce sorulması gereken soru hangi Sokrates'ten bahsediyor olunuşudur. Kendisinin yazdığı herhangi bir doküman yoktur, onun hakkında bilinenler sadece diğer filozofların, Platon ve Ksenofon gibi, yazdıkları diyaloglar ve bu diyaloglardan diğer filozofların ve tarihçilerin yaptıkları çıkarımlardır. Platon'un kendi yazdığı diyaloglarda Sokrates ismi altında Platon kendi düşüncelerini yazdığı kabul edilmiş ve bu sebepten dolayı "Platonik Sokrates" karakteri ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu karakterin yanında tarihi yani asıl Sokrates'ten bahsedilip bahsedilemeyeceği birçok kişi tarafından tartışılmış ve ortaya üç farklı yaklaşım çıkmıştır. Birincisi, tarihi ve Platoncu Sokrates arasındaki ayrımı kabul edip metinler incelendiğinde asıl Sokrates'in tanımlanabileceği iken diğer bir düşünce de bu iki karakter arasında kesinlikle bir ayrım yapılamayacağını söyler, yine de Platon'un metinlerinin altında Sokrates'in izlerinin bulunabileceğini ve bu sayede tarihi Sokrates'e dair kesin yargılar yürütemesek de bunun sezinlenebileceğini savunur. Üçüncü yaklaşım, ilk iki yaklaşımdan tamamıyla ayrı bir savı savunur ve hiç kimse tarihi bir Sokrates'ten bahsedemez der. Hâlbuki metinler incelendiğinde Sokrates'e dair ortak bir çatı kurulabilir. Bu sonuca farklı yazarlar tarafından yazılmış, farklı diyaloglarda geçen Sokrates karakteri ve yaşam biçiminden, ayrıca bu metinlerde geçen konuların, tartışılan kavramların ortak olmasından ulaşılabilir.

¹⁸⁵ *elenchus* kelimesi *elenchein* kelimesinden gelmektedir ki bu da deneme, utanma ve reddetme anlamlarını taşır.

Tarihi ve Platoncu Sokrates hakkında kesin bir ayırım yapılamasa bile metinlerde, bu ister Plato tarafından yazılsın ister Ksenofon ya da başka metinde Sokrates'ten bahsedildiğinde dahi, O hep ılımlı bir karakterdir, davranışları ölçülüdür ve diyaloglarda da bireyin kendisinin davranışlarında hep ölçülü davranması gerektiğini savunur. Bu tutumu, onun erdeme dair konuşmalarında da yer alacaktır ve erdem insanın iyiyi takip etmesi, iyiyi seçmesi derken ölçülü olmayı da zorunluluk olarak ekleyecektir. Hayatını hiçbir zaman sahip olduğu ya da olmadığı mülklere göre yönetmemiş olan Sokrates tasviri, konu zevk ve tutkulara gelince de öne sürülen argümanlarla tarihi Sokrates hakkında tutarlı bir tabloyu önümüze koyar. Şöyle ki; bir bireyin hayatını nasıl sürdürdüğü onun aklındaki hayatla iç içedir, insan inandıklarının peşinden koşar, onları eylemeye çabalar. Sokrates bahsedildiği üzere maldan mülkten vazgeçmiş, hayatını yetecek olanla idame ettirmeye çalışan bir bireyken asıl önemin ruha ve ruhla ilgili olana verilmesini çeşitli diyaloglarda tekrarlamış olması onun karakterinin karşısına bir ayna tutmak gibidir. Çünkü yaşam şekli, yaşama karşı tutumu ve diyaloglarda dile getirdiği aynıdır ve bu sebeptendir ki bir nebze de olsa o tarihi Sokrates'e yakınlaşabilir ve onu sezebiliriz.

Hayatını ve felsefesini iyinin ve kötünün bilgisine göre yöneten, mutluluğa ulaşmak için ölçülü ve tutarlı olan erdemli davranışları öngören Sokrates, diyaloglarında diğer konuşmacılarla birlikte ahlakın bilgisini araştırmıştır. Bunu yaparken de az önce belirtildiği gibi *elenchus*'u kullanması argümanlar içerisinde rasyonel olmayan yani mantığa aykırı gelenlerin elenmesine yardımcı olup, sorulan sorunun bir adım daha cevaba yaklaşmasına sebebiyet vermiştir. Konuşmalarda amaç hep iyi olana dairdir, iyi bir hayata dair olan sorulardır ve Sokrates'e göre iyi hayat ve başına iyi sıfatını almış her kavram erdemli olmanın yolundan geçer. Erdemli olabilmek için, neyin iyi ve neyin kötü olduğunu bilmemiz gereklidir, iyiyi bildiğimiz sürece onu eyleyeceğizdir. Dikkat edilmesi gereken işte bu eyleme kısmıdır, çünkü bireyler doğuştan iyi olanı bilir ve tek başına bilgi erdemli olmak ve dolayısıyla mutlu olmak

için yeterli değildir. Erdemli olanı eylesek ve eylemlerimiz kendi içerisinde tutarlılıkla devam ettiği sürece mutluluktan bahsedilebilecektir. İyi bilgisinin bireye doğuştan dâhil olmasının yanında iyiyi seçme de yine insana tabi tutulmuştur çünkü bu seçme gücü insana yine doğuştan akıl fakültesiyle birlikte verilmiştir.

Platon'un *Protagoras*'ının ana fikri en büyük iyinin keyifli bir hayat olduğudur. Eğer ki zevkler kontrol edilmezse, ruhun değil de bedenın isteklerine yönelik bir hayat sürülürse asıl acının bu yönden geleceğini vurgular. Ruh, Sokrates için bedenden her zaman daha ön plandadır. Ksenofon'un *Sempozyum*'unun sevgi üzerine geçen konuşmada onun iki türlülüğüne parmak basılmış ve Sokrates, insanın kendisini yönlendirmesi gerekenin kutsal olan aşka yönlendirmesi gerektiğini, ruhun ihtiyaçlarına karşı gözlerini açık tutması gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Buradaki ikinci tür olan aşk ise bedene dair olandır ve böyle bir sevgi ruhtan ve onun ihtiyaçlarından kişiyi uzak tutacağı için kişi kendini zevk ve tutkulara tutsak edecektir. Ruha dair olan sevgi türü ise bireye hâlihazırda kendinde bulunan iyinin bilgisiyyle erdemli davranışa olan yakınlığını arttıracak ve aklın yolunda yürümüş olacaktır ki bu en nihayetinde mutluluğa varacak olan bir yoldur. Her ne kadar akla sahip olmaktan bahsedilse de insanın duygulanımlarının onun hayatındaki yerini tamamen silip atmak mümkün kılınmayacağı için, duygulanımların ortaya çıkardığı zevk ve tutkuları kontrol edebilmek, onlara yön verebilmek, onlardan iyiyi ayıklayabilmek insanın elindedir ve akıl burada başroldedir. Bedene dair güzellik her zaman gelip geçicidir. Ruhun güzelliği ise yara almaz, onun iyiliği her daim sürer, dolayısıyla onun ihtiyaçlarına kulak vermek insan için mantıklı olacaktır. Hem kalıcı olmayan hem de ruha zarar veren bedenın ihtiyaçlarına odaklanıp, arzularımızın peşinden koşarak, sürekli bir güce kendimizi teslim ederek, gün geçtikçe ruhumuzu daha da boğan ve onu yoran bedensel ihtiyaçlar kişiyi erdemsizliğe iterken bir yandan da mutluluktan da uzaklaştırmaktadır. Bu demek değildir ki bedenın ihtiyaçlarına tamamen göz kapanmalı, Sokrates'in birçok diyalogunda yer aldığı gibi, akıl yeteneğine sahip her

bir birey iyi olanı seçip kendini erdemli hareketlerle yönlendirebilir ve bunu elbette ki bedeninin temel ihtiyaçlarına karşılık vererek yapar. Çünkü az önce de belirtildiği gibi O'nun için en iyi hayat keyifli geçen hayattır ve bedeninin ihtiyaçları karşılanmadan bu mümkün gözükmemektedir. O, sadece ölçülü davranmanın önemini vurgular ve ihtiyaçların ötesinde olan zevk ve tutkulara karşı uyarır, çünkü onlar ruhu güzelleştirecek olan iyinin bilgisine dayalı erdemli davranışları getirmeyecektir. Bu sebeple, Sokrates'in mutluluğa dair felsefesi şu şekilde özetlenebilir: erdem, iyinin bilgisi, iyi ve kötünün ayırdına varabilmeyi sağlayan akıl.

Mutluluk arayışında anahtarın felsefede olduğunu öne süren Stoacılar, bu arayışta Sokrates'in yolunda ilerleyerek cevabın insanın kendisinde olduğunu savunmuşlardır. Mutsuzluk onlar için ruhun arzularla birlikte hastalanmasıdır ve Stoacılar tıpkı bir etik hastane görevi üstlenerek bu hastalığın oluşumunu ve nasıl tedavi edilebileceğini gösteren bir felsefeyi tanıtır.

Evreni bütün olarak ele alan Stoacılar, bireyi bu düzenin en küçük parçası olarak görürler. Felsefeleri sadece bireyleri değil evreni de kapsar; her bir birey birbirine bu cihanda bağlıdır ve yapılan her hareket birbirini etkileyecektir. Bu sebeple kararlar alırken sırf kendi iyiliğimiz için toplumun iyiliğini de dikkate almalıyız derler. Her ne kadar insanlar birbirlerinden statü, cinsiyet, fobiler, alışkanlıklar, sahip olunan işler ve diğer birçok yönden farklılık gösterse de onları ortak çatıya alan onların akıl yürütme yetisidir. İnsan doğası gereği bir güdü olarak iyiyi arar ve bu arayışta da onun en büyük yardımcısı akıl olacaktır. Bir kararın iyi mi ya da tam tersi mi olacağını o kararı eylemeden önce akıl gösterecektir. Burada bahsedilen 'iyi' Stoacı düşüncede her zaman mutluluk ile eş anlamdadır ve mutluluk da her zaman erdem ile bağlantılı olacaktır.

Kişinin doğasına uygun yaşaması demek aynı anda kişinin akla ve onun gösterdiklerine uygun yaşamasıdır. Bunlara göre yaşarken kişi erdemli biri haline gelecek ve bu kişinin hayatı Stoacı düşüncede, tıpkı Sokrates'in öğretilerinde de

olduđu gibi, mutlu olarak adlandırılacaktır. Erdem, iyi olana yönlendirir ve kendisi her zaman seçilmeye değerdir. Bu tıpkı, Sokrates'in insanın iyiyi bile bile kötüyü seçmeyeceđi ve onu eylemeyeceđi argümanına benzer. İnsan, kendi doğasında iyiye sahiptir ve akla sahip olduđu için doğası geređi de ahlaksızlıđı deđil ahlaklı olanı, iyiye yönlendireni ve iyi olanı yapacaktır. Stoacı düşüncede dört temel erdem vardır ve bunlar sağduyu, cesaret, adalet ve ölçülülüktür. Bunlar neyin iyi olduđuna dair bilgilerdir. Ahlaksızlıkları örneklendirmek gerekirse adaletsizlik, korkaklık, düşüncesizlik olarak sıralanabilir. Nasıl ki ahlak iyinin bilgisi ise ahlaksızlık ise birer cehalet göstergesidir. Buradaki önemli nokta, Stoa felsefesinde erdemın tamamıyla bilgi ile ilgili oluşudur. Ruh, erdem ile aydınlanır ve erdemın gücünü sağlayan bilgidir. Sahneyi erdemsizlik alınca, ruh karanlıkta acı çekecektir, çünkü o zaman ruh, Tanrı'nın bir parçası olan rasyonellikten uzak kalacaktır. Dolayısıyla hasta olan bir ruh, mutsuz olunan bir hayata tekabül etmektedir. Mutsuzluđun ana sebebi, mutluluđun erdeme bađı olmayan yerlerde aranıyor oluşudur. Mutluluk, ahlaklı davranışlar, erdem ve akıl ile el ele yürür iken, temelde yapılan yanlış mutluluđu bunların dışarısında aramaktır ve dışsal olanla onu elde edebileceđinin düşünülmesidir.

İyi diye adlandırılan her şey ahlaka, kötü olarak adlandırılan her şey de ahlaksızlık kategorisine girer. Bu ikisi arasında kalan her şey ise *nötr*, yani ne iyi ne kötüdürler. Erdemin dışında kalan her şey gerçek anlamda iyi olamazlar ve ahlaksızlıđın dışında her şey de tamamıyla kötü olamazlar. Bu *nötr* kategorisi Stoda tutku olarak adlandırılır bu arzulananlar kategorisi itibar, ün, yüksek sosyal statü, düşük sosyal statü, para ve yoksulluk olarak örneklendirilebilir. Günlük hayatımızda edindiğimizde duygulanımlar için atılan ilk adımı duyularımız oluşturur. Her ne kadar kişi bu noktada pasif olsa da, onların neye yorumlanacağını, hangi şekilde aktive olacağı ise kişinin kendi iradesine bađlıdır. Duyuların birey tarafından yorumlanmasıyla oluşan duygular ise yanlış yorumlandığında, yani erdeme uygun hareketlerle

sonuçlanmayınca, ortaya tutkular olarak çıkmaktadır ve Stoacı düşüncede bunlar doğuştan gelmeyen, ruha zarar veren irrasyonel parçalardır. Dolayısıyla mutluluğun önünde duran en büyük engellerdir. İnsan bu tutkularını bir ceket misali sırtından çıkarıp atamaz, onlar günlük yaşamın her bir saniyesinde aktif haldedirler. Fakat onlar hala aklın yanlış kararlarıdır. En başta duyular olmak üzere duyguları hayattan silip atılamayacağı için kişinin yapacağı tek şey kendine bakmak olacak ve cevabı orada bulacaktır; yani ona doğuştan verilen olan akli kullanıp, onu dinleyip ruhunu iyi olana, iyinin bilgisi yani erdeme yönlendirip kendini bu rasyonel olmayan kısımlardan soyutlamak olacaktır. Algılama, algılananların yorumlanması ve bunların bir karara dönüştürülmesinde insan kendini sürekli iyi olana odaklamalı ve kararlarını bu doğrultuda vermelidir. Eğer sağlıklı bir ruh isteniyorsa, kişi doğasına göre davranacak, iyiye yönelecek ve kararlarını tutkularına göre değil erdeme göre alacaktır.

Birey mutluluk adına hayatının her saniyesinde tutkularıyla mücadele etmek zorundayken, Stoacı düşüncede tutkularından tamamıyla sıyrılmış olan kişiyi hikmet sahibi olarak adlandırırlar. Bu kişi tıpkı diğer insanlar gibidir, aynı yollardan geçer, onun da duygulanımları sonucu oluşan tutkuları vardır, fakat hikmet sahibi bu insan kararlarını zevklerine ve tutkularına göre almaz, hareketlerini bu iki faktöre göre ayarlamaz. O, doğasına göre davranır ve akli takip eder. Erdemli olanı yapmaya çalışır, çünkü o bilir ki, iyi olan davranış onun ruhunu güzelleştirecek, ruhunu sağlıklı kılacak ve en nihayetinde mutluluğa erişecektir. Bu bir yaşama sanatıdır ve Stoacı düşüncede yaşama sanatı felsefenin ta kendisidir.

Mutluluk ve ahlak arasındaki bağı olabildiğince somut hale getiren ve bu öğretisini özgürlük üzerinden yapan Yunan Stoacı filozof Epiktetos M.S. 55 ve 135 yılları arasında yaşamıştır. Hayata köle olarak gelen Epiktetos, Nero'nun sekreteri Epaphroditos'un kölesi olarak hayatını yaşarken, Musonius Rufus'un öğrencisi olarak eğitim görme şansına erişip onunla Stoacı felsefe ile üzerine çalıştılar. Bu eğitimi sırasında kendine örnek alacağı ve diğer insanlara da rol modeli almaları gerektiğini

söyleyeceği Sokrates ve Diyojen ile tanışmış oldu. Stoacı felsefe, Sokrates ve Diyojen onun kendi felsefesinin temelini oluşturacaktı. Nero'nun ölümünün ardından özgür kılınan Epiktetos, Domitian tarafından bütün filozofların şehirden sürülmesiyle birlikte Yunanistan'a geçmiş, Nicopolis'te yaşamını sürdürmüştür. Orada kendisine okul açıp, bilgilerini öğrencilerine aktarmıştır. Didaktik bir öğretmen olan Epiktetos öğrencilerine mutluluk konusunda yanlışlarını günlük hayattan birebir örneklerle anlatacak ve onların yanlışlarından sıyrılıp bir bakıma kurtuluşlarını sağlayacaktır. Kendisi herhangi bir yazı bırakmasa da öğrencisi Arrianus'un ders notlarından meydana gelen dört adet *Konuşmalar* ayriyeten de Epiktetos'un özlü sözlerinden oluşan bir *El Kitabı* sayesinde Epiktetos'un felsefesi ile tanışma şansını yakalamışızdır. Hayata köle olarak başlayan bu filozof, bizlere özgürlüğün insanın kendi doğasında olduğunu ve bunun dışarıdan gelenle sağlanamayacağını kanıtlamış, mutluluğa dair konuşmalarının öncülünü bu özgürlüğe adanmıştır.

Epiktetos'un ahlak felsefesi sadece teorik bir düzen değil ayrıca bir yaşama biçimidir. Bunun sebebi hayata ve felsefeye Stoacı bir tavırla yaklaşmasından dolayıdır. Yine Stoacıların kabul ettiği gibi o da algıların ve etrafımızdaki şeylerin etkisinin kişinin elinde olmadığını kabul eder, onlar duyular aracılığıyla kişinin isteği olmadan gelirler ve bu süreklidir. Bu hususta, aklın ve iradenin bir gücü yoktur. Duyular aracılığıyla oluşan etkilenişlerin bireyin verdiği kararlar zevk ve tutku haline gelmesi konusunda ki burada Epiktetos'un yine Stoacı yönü kolaylıkla anlaşılır, insan tanrı ile ortak yönü olan akıl araya girecektir. İnsan bu güce sahiptir. Eğer tanrı bize düşünme, değerlendirme, sorgulama ve anlama gibi güçler veriyse, kısaca insan rasyonel bir varlık ise rasyonel bir varlık olarak yaşamalıdır. Epiktetos için bu durum şuna benzer: nasıl ki bir bülbül hayatına bülbül gibi şakıyarak devam ediyorsa, insan da rasyonel bir varlık olduğu için ona göre eylemlerde bulunmalıdır.

Onun felsefesinde özgürlüğün rolü büyüktür. Epiktetos'a göre bir tiranın kişiye verdiği sürgün cezasının bir önemi yoktur. Çünkü bu sürgün sadece bedene uygulanan

bir sürgünden öteye geçemeyecektir. Bedene dair olanlar ise bireyin odak noktası olmamalıdır, önemli olan ruhun özgürlüğü ve sağlığıdır. Ruh, erdem ile beslenir, insan kendini sürekli bir ahlaki amaç içerisinde tutmalıdır, çünkü bu onu erdemli bir insan yapacak ve mutlu olacaktır. Ahlaki amacın dışında kalan ise tutkulardır. Tutkular ruhun zincirleridir, insanı asıl köle yapan tutkulardır ve insanın hareketlerinde yönetici akıl olmadığı sürece, insan kendini tutkularıyla idame ettirdiği sürece asıl sürgüne gönderilen bedeni değil ruhudur. Oysaki ruh özgürdür, kişi kendini tutkulara ve zevklere mahkûm kıldığında, kendi iradesinin dışında olanın peşinden koştuğunda kişi köleleşmiş ve mutluluktan uzaklaşmıştır. Tutkular, iradenin dışındadır ve onlar kişiyi iyiye iletmeyecek, ahlaki çerçevenin dışına çıkarak da kişinin asıl tiranı olacaklardır.

Epiktetos mutluluk ile ilgili insanlara çok basit bir çözüm sunar: eğer mutlu olmak isteniliyorsa ona dair olana yönelmelidir. Bu tıpkı aç olduğumuzda yemek gibidir, eğer bir sınavdan başarılı olunmak isteniyorsa gerekli çabanın ve isteğin gösterilmesinin şartı gibidir. Sınava çalışırken, çalışılması gereken konuların, çözülmesi gerek soruların ne olduğunu bilmek yeterli olmayacağı gibi mutluluk için de sadece ahlaklı davranışın ne olduğunu bilmek yeterli değildir. Bu davranışı aktif hale getirilmesi gerekmektedir. Tek başına bilgi mutluluk için yeterli olmayacaktır. Bu noktada, kişinin “Ben kendi kontrolüm altında olana yönelmeliyim, kendi kontrolüm dışında olan, yani iradem dışında olanı kontrol edemem, bu geminin kaptanı bensem kendi iradem dışında olanlara sızlanamam, üzülemez, onların peşinden koşamam. Ne olursan olsun, fırtınalar içerisinde olsam bile, bir kaptan gemiyi nasıl yönetiyorsa ben de irademle ve aklımla tutkulara kapılmadan ve onların kölesi olmadan, iyiye yönelerek ve onu eyleyerek mutluluğa ulaşabileceğim.” diyebilmelidir.

Mutluluk yolunda insan sırf kendisi için değil, içerisinde olduğu toplum için de adımlar atar. Epiktetos bu durumu ayağın vücutla olan ilişkisi örneği ile açıklar. Ayağın vücut için faydalarından biri, ayakta durur iken ve yürür iken vücudun

dengesini sağlamasıdır. Ayağı vücuttan ayırdığımızda ise ayak, artık ayak olmayacaktır. Bunun sebebi, ayağın artık işlevini kaybetmiş olmasıdır. Aynı senaryo insan için de geçerlidir, çünkü ayağın vücudun ayrılamaz bir parçası olduğu gibi insan da toplumun ayrılamaz bir parçasıdır. Dolayısıyla insan toplumun, nihayetinde evrenin, koparılamaz bir parçası olduğundan, eylediği her hareketin kendini etkileyeceği gibi topluma da olacak olan etkisinden emin olmalıdır.

Epiktetos'un öğretisinde, birey her daim tutkularına ve zevklerine karşı tetikte olmalıdır. Önceden tutkuların erdeme dâhil olmadığı ve ahlaki amacımızın her daim iyinin eylesmesi olduğu belirtilmişti. Erdemli bireyler olabilmek adına bir gün iyi bir kötü olanı seçmek tutarlı olmayacaktır. Mutluluk nasıl ki tek başına bir ömre hükmediyor ise aynı şekilde hareketlerimiz de her zaman iyiyi içermelidir. Bir seferlik de olsa yoldan çıkıp kötüyü eylemek bireyi erdemli yapmayacaktır. Bu sebeple, her zaman tutkulara karşı tetikte olunmalıdır. Epiktetos bu durumu ise olimpiyatlara katılan bir atlet örneğiyle aydınlatır. Olimpiyatlar için bir atlet antrenmanlarını aksatmaz ve sürekli çalışır. Oyunlarda başarılı olsa dahi çalışmalarına devam eder çünkü bu gerçek bir atletin yapacağı şeydir. Birey ise, aynı gerçek bir atlet gibi tutkulara karşı gözü açık olmalıdır, her daim kendini eğitmelidir, iyiyi eylemeyi asla bırakmamalıdır, bir iyi hareket sergileyince ardına kötüyü seçmek mutluluk ve ahlak için geçerli ve tutarlı bir hareket olmayacaktır.

Eğer kişi bütün bunların farkında ise kendini dışsal olanla yönetmemelidir. Para ve güç istençleri, daha da zengin olmak veya daha da güçlü olmak için yapılanlar kişinin ruhunu yıpratmaktan öteye geçememektedir. Bir birey bu ve bunlar gibi haz ve arzularının peşinden koşarsa, o kişinin varlığı hiçbir zaman iyelik eki alamayacak olan bu kontrol edilemez isimler için olacaktır. İnsanın para, güç, beden güzelliği gibi yitip gidecek olana yatırım yapması anlamsız olur, çünkü yitip gideceğini bile bile hala bu yatırımın arkasında durmak aslında boşa kürek çektiğini de onaylamak demektir. Yine de şunu kabul etmek gerekir ki, Epiktetos'un önerdiği yol olabildiğince zorludur ve

hatta kimileri için imkânsızdır. İnsan, isteklerinden ve arzularından ayrılamaz gibi gözüke de, kişinin özgürlüğünün ve iradesinin farkında olması ve iyiyi eyleme istenci ve bunu gerçekleştirmesi mümkündür. Zaten mutluluğu isteyen birey için bu amacın sadece kendisi gösterilen çabayı değerli kılar. Mutluluk ve ahlak felsefesinin geçersiz olduğunu söyleyenlere yönelik Epiktetos, Sokrates olmasak da, Sokrates olmak istiyorsak onun gibi yaşamalıyız derken aslında mutluluğu işaret eder. Mutlu olmak istiyorsak, tutku ve arzular bu konuda bize engelse, onlardan sıyrılmak imkânsız olsa dahi bu mutlu olma istencini ortadan kaldıramaz. Kanımca, günümüzün insanı mutluluğu garantili ve anlık olarak gördüğü için, kendisini tutkularıyla belirlediği ve hayallerini arzularıyla süslediği için Sokrates, Stoa ve Epiktetos'un ortaya koyduğu mutluluk ve ahlak felsefesine zor, uygulanamaz, geçersiz gibi yorumlar getirir. Getirilen bu eleştirinin yani mutluluğa giden yolun haklı tarafı zorluğudur ve yine kanımca gözden kaçırılan noktası ise mutluluğun kendisinin bu yolda olmaya değer oluşudur.

B. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

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YAZARIN

Soyadı :

Adı :

Bölümü :

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) :

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TEZİN TÜRÜ: Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın.
2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullanıcılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)
3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)

Yazarın imzası

Tarih