

A History of Philosophy

15 Epicurean Philosophy

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And today I want to start with the Epicureans, but begin with some comments about the Cyrenaics. Okay. Both the Cyrenaics and the Cynics, whom we'll come to later on, are spoken of by Kaufman in his introduction to material on this period as Socratic schools.

And yet as you read them, you'll think they're most unlike Socrates, or read about them, you'll think they're most unlike Socrates. The Socratic note simply represents a point of departure, not a point of agreement. Their point of departure, both the Cyrenaics and the Cynics, is Socrates' famous dictum, know thyself, know thyself.

Which, in Socrates, of course, had to do with a self-understanding which could lead to a process of improvement of the soul. And that was not altogether alien to the Cyrenaics and Cynics, but what the soul was and what they thought would improve it is markedly different. The Cyrenaics particularly stand in contrast because they are so plainly hedonists.

That is to say, the good is pleasure. And it was a very individualized pursuit of pleasure, and so it is an egotistical hedonism. My pleasure, egoistical hedonism.

But in the history of ethics, they stand as, I think, the first clear-cut school of thought advocating the maximum pleasure of the maximum intensity and the maximum immediacy, if you please. The maximum pleasure of the maximum intensity and the maximum immediacy. It's sort of an extreme hedonism.

Now, how did they get to that? How did they get to that from Socrates' know thyself? Well, the purpose of knowing yourself is to understand what will give you enjoyment. If you know what gives you enjoyment, what gives you pleasure, then you can pursue pleasure. And so self-understanding becomes an instrument for hedonistic purposes.

Knowing the Cyrenaic is a matter of sense experience. And it's in our sense experience that we enjoy pleasure or feel pain. And the pleasurable sensations are what we call good.

We desire them. The painful sensations we call bad. We try to avoid them.

And notice the fact that its sensation implies that it's a physically based sort of thing primarily. There is no universal norm as to what people find pleasurable. It's just that each individual seeks to maximize the pleasure for herself, for himself.

Now, a couple of qualifications. They recognize that unrestrained excess produces pain the morning after the night before. And therefore want to avoid such unrestrained excess.

In other words, stay master of yourself, of your environment. Be reasonable in that way. But, of course, being reasonable is just a means to a hedonistic end.

Okay? Now, that description is characteristic of Aristopos of Cyrene. Cyrene, of course, is in North Africa. And it's from that location that the term Cyrenaic derives.

The other individual whose name has come down to us in this connection is Hegasius, who distinguished himself by, while still a hedonist, being a pessimist about life. That is to say, the maximum pleasure we can have is the complete absence of pain. We can't really produce any surplus of pleasure.

In this life. So, since the happiest outcome is painlessness, the best thing to do is to end it all. And he became a counselor of suicide.

It's said that he was separated from his teaching job because he was losing students. And, understandably. But it's an interesting sort of outcome.

But it's not the only one of that sort. To begin with, there's a whole literature on the ethics of suicide. Beginning back there with Hegesius and more lately in the 20th century, the French existential writer, Albert Camus.

In between, lots of others. And frequently, those who find justification for suicide do it on a hedonistic basis. On a hedonistic basis.

That is to say, if you want to minimize the pain, maximize pleasure, and there's no surplus of pleasure possible, then to minimize the pain, what is left? You see. And so that sort of rationalization at that juncture. Well, the Cyrenaics are an interesting beginning of hedonistic ethics.

An extreme sort that is soon moderated. And, in the course of time, the Cyrenaics simply were absorbed into the growing Epicurean movement. Which is a more moderate kind of hedonism.

More moderate version. And the two names of importance for us in Epicureanism, one is Epicurus, obviously gave his name to this. And the other is the Roman poet of the first century, Lucretius.

Lucretius. Whose work, *The Nature of Things*, is a, oh, extended philosophical poem. There are blank verse translations available.

And if you're interested in poetry that describes a whole mechanistic cosmology and develops out of it, a theory of sense perception and ethics, and a political theory, all in one massive, long blank verse poem, then, by all means, take a look at *The Nature of Things*. Since *The Nature of Things* is rather vague, some modern versions have given it the title *The Nature of the Universe*. Which makes it equally inclusive, of course.

It's just that it sounds a bit better than *The Nature of Things*. What are things? Well, the whole universe of everything, you see. And that's really what the poem is about.

Well, the Epicurean poem, then, on the nature of things, the Lucretius poem, rather, is really an attempt to systematize, to develop further, what Epicurus had done in the third century BC. Lucretius in the first century BC. Epicurus in the third.

And the conception of pleasure, which they emphasize, they spoke of as ataraxia. Ataraxia. Those of you with some Greek will recognize the alpha privative, which is a negative prefix.

And the verb tarasso, which is to harass, to trouble, to buffet. To knock around. So, ataraxia is, as they defined it, freedom from pain in the body and trouble in the soul.

Freedom from pain in the body and trouble in the soul. So, the pleasure-pain question is tied to both body and soul. Okay? Freedom from pain in the body, trouble in the soul.

Some commentators have noted that moderation may have been due to the fact that Epicurus had stomach ulcers and so had to avoid pain in the body. And therefore moderated the physical side of the hedonism at least. But in any case, what they are seeking is a life of contentment.

A life of contentment that has found freedom from all that might disturb, upset, or harass. And for that reason, Epicurus and Lucretius make a qualitative difference between pleasures. It's easy enough to think of quantitative differences between pleasures.

This is more painful than that. This is more pleasurable than that. But as soon as you start trying to do that, you begin to see that the differences aren't entirely a matter of quantity.

You can say the dentist who numbs the gums produces less pain than one who doesn't. A quantitative comparison that way is easy enough. But how do you compare the pain of a toothache with the pain of a jilted lover? I mean, that's apples and oranges.

How do you compare them? The qualitative thing is so much more difficult. And yet it's so essential. And so they're concerned then with qualitative distinctions that are measured not in quantitative terms, but in terms of high quality as against low quality.

High quality against low quality. Where the higher quality pleasures, of course, are pleasures of good company, good friends. The pleasures of education.

The pleasure of living in a just society. Of having what nature requires rather than constantly overindulging. So the higher pleasures.

And the point is that the higher pleasures are more intrinsically pleasurable. And more intrinsically pleasurable in and of themselves. Friendship.

Good company. Learning. So forth.

More intrinsically. Well, this is the kind of hedonism at which they aim. But the most significant thing about it is that they try to ground this hedonism in a metaphysic.

And the metaphysic that it's grounded in is the atomism, the atomistic materialism of Democritus. Now, remember Democritus. Back to the pre-Socratics.

You were warned that we'd have to have them at our fingertips. But Democritus was the pluralist who maintained that everything is composed of atoms in empty space. Produced by some sort of cosmic vortex that whirls these atoms of various shapes and sizes around.

They combine to form larger compounds. And everything that results from this chance process produces the kind of world in which we live. Well, very, very similar with simply one particular difference that comes up with Lucretius and Epicurus.

That is to say, instead of the cosmic vortex whirling things around. They take what appears to them to be a more obvious empirical standpoint. Everything is constantly falling down.

So that the natural motion of atoms is simply vertical fall, vertical fall. And it's out of that, the collisions that occur, that compounds result. Now, in order to get to the way in which he develops that.

Let's take a look at the Epicurus selections beginning on page 454. Beginning on page 454. The picture that he poses here is a classic picture of this kind of materialism.

Classic picture of it. It's one that was picked up in the Renaissance. With the scientific revolution that took place then.

Because, as you're aware, there was a scientific revolution in the 16th and 17th centuries. Involving Galileo, Copernicus, and systematized by Newton. Was a move to a mechanistic kind of explanation.

So that the whole physical universe is explained in terms of the movement of particles of matter. Under the impact of physical forces. And the advocates of that science very freely cited Democritus.

As the person who impressed them most. In fact, when we get to the philosophers, Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes. We find they cite Democritus too.

And appeal to this kind of Democritan atomism. So the picture we have then is one that is of lasting importance. Updated in some ways, yes.

Okay, on 454. 454 in the first column. The center paragraph, second sentence.

You notice this to begin with. Nothing comes into being out of what is non-existent. Now this is a classic Greek dictum.

Classic in Roman thought as well. In Latin, *ex nihilo nihil fit*. Out of nothing, nothing comes.

Out of nothing, nothing comes. Nothing comes into being out of what is non-existent. And that, of course, is characteristic of all the pre-Socratics.

It's characteristic of Plato and of Aristotle. The elements are eternal. The atoms are eternal, in this case.

If everything is made from atoms and empty space. Then atoms and empty space must be eternal. Uncreated, okay? So there's the basic stuff.

Indeed, this is how he goes on in the next paragraph. He says the whole of being consists of bodies and space. And just across in the next column, the sum of things.

Is unlimited because of the multitude of atoms. And the extent of the void. The multitude of atoms, the extent of the void.

No finite number, an infinite number. Vast, endless. So the basic ingredients are pretty plain.

On 455, first complete paragraph. The atoms are in continual motion. Through all eternity.

And then the following paragraph points out that they exist from everlasting. Atoms and a void. Later on, he says they come in different shapes.

Different shapes, somewhat different sizes. Later on, on 457, if you want to check that, 457. He points out that while they have different shapes.

Different weight. Different size. That's all we can say from observation.

He's making a distinction that becomes very important. Between primary qualities and secondary qualities. As they get to be called later on.

Primary qualities are spatial properties. Size, shape, spatial occupancy, density, therefore weight. But not secondary qualities.

That is to say, the qualities that we are aware of by particular sense organs. Colour, smell, taste, sound, feeling, texture. Not secondary qualities.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, this amounts to the fact that the primary qualities are viewed as objectively real. Properties of things, physical bodies. Secondary qualities are viewed as subjective.

Qualities only of your experience. Subjective. Qualities only of your experience.

To make that distinction requires a theory of sense perception. How does sense perception work? That the secondary qualities should be all subjective. And Epicurus suggests how sense perception works.

On page 455, top of the second column. New paragraph. Where he says there are outlines or films which are of the same shape as solid bodies, but very thin.

So that we cannot see it. These transparent films sort of peel off from physical bodies. If they're transparent, they have no colour.

You can't see them. But these films moving through space enter through the sense organs, through the eyes, for instance, and are perceived within. And being perceived within, they shrank, but they retain the same shape.

And so we perceive shapes. Without colour. Without smell.

Without secondary qualities. So that the secondary qualities are qualities of our experience produced in the process. But not qualities of external objects.

Okay? And that's basically the theory that you find in John Locke in the late 17th century. That secondary qualities may be caused ultimately by physical stimuli in conjunction with the mind, the brain, and our physical apparatus. But they're purely subjective.

They're produced subjectively. They have no objective reality. After all, in this materialist mechanistic universe, remember Tennyson's line, can I take a thing so dead, embrace it for my mortal good? Colourless, odourless, feelingless, this dead material world.

You see? Now that's the kind of picture that develops later on, and it begins to be implicit here in Epicurus. Empty space, then, is unbounded in every direction. The atoms are falling vertically in space.

How then do they collide to produce any possible changes? Combinations. And it's Lucretius who makes this very plain. He suggests that in the process of falling, an occasional atom for no known reason or cause will swerve off course.

The Lucretians swerve. It's like a brilliant ball pitched in baseball that swerves on its way, and so produces things. Well, this swerving atom then tends to set up a chain reaction, like a collision on the freeway.

Collision after collision, combination after combination occurring. And fanciful though it seems, what he's trying to say is that there is an element of indeterminacy and unpredictability in nature. An element of indeterminacy and unpredictability in nature.

And it's by virtue of that, an element of causal indeterminacy, that there is that phenomenon that we think of as human freedom, which is really something that occurs when there's a gap in otherwise unbroken causal shapes. So it's that causal indeterminacy then, which allows for the unpredictable that we think of as a free act. So, the picture develops.

Go one step further to page 459. 459. And you have the editor's note at the bottom of the second column that the soul is composed of the smoothest and roundest of atoms.

The smoothest and roundest of atoms. Yeah, so you have basically a materialist view of the soul. He says that part of it is irrational, scattered over the rest of the frame.

The rational part resides in the chest, as is manifest from fears and joy and so forth. And so the soul then is physically composed, pervades the whole body, a vital spirit.

And being material at death, the soul, that is to say, those small, round, smooth atoms, so easily escapes from the body.

And so there is no immortality. But it's here that he accounts for the experience of pleasure. Because if the atoms of the soul are smooth and round, they will feel pain; they will be pushed and jagged as a result of rough atoms.

Rough, jagged shapes will be troublesome to the soul. Whereas smooth, round atoms, like those you get in conversation with good friends or in reasonable discussion, and so forth, can provide soothing sensations of pleasure. And so there's a physiology that underlies the experience of pain.

Now, what remains is to talk about reason. What is reason? Well, reason is simply an activity of the mind, the soul, caused, yes, by physical process, that simply organizes our experience and names things, which is part of the organizing process. Organizes them and names them.

And the result is a purely conventional kind of language usage. Words simply have conventional meanings. But not only words, the way in which we have organized our experience in any community, in any society.

Therefore, the way in which we learn to think about things and understand them, our theoretical understanding of things is also purely conventional. So if he were talking about science today, he would have a conventionalist view of science, you see. That is to say, our best scientific understandings are simply social conventions.

Conventional ways of talking about things. Which is a view that has been held repeatedly throughout the history of science, way through into the 20th century. By no means the only one, of course, but it's one recurrent thing.

Well, the final note, then, in this letter to Herodotus comes at the end on pages 62 and 63, when he talks about death. If there is no life after death to worry about, then death need not cause trouble in the mind. And if there is no life after death, then there will be no pain in the body.

So if with death there is neither pain in the body nor trouble in the mind, death is no bother or trouble to us, you see. And so, brushing off the fear of death. I suppose it should be said that this, in the face of developing influences of eastern religions and mystery religions, was rather a welcome thing among some of the Hellenists, some of the Romans.

They found it sort of liberating. Now, the outcomes of this, you find, then, in the following selection, labelled principal doctrines, where the first few pages simply talk about hedonism, the pursuit of pleasure, and the way in which that is moderated but

still sustained. But the thing that I want to draw your attention to is the comments on the last page, 466, about justice.

About justice. For it's one thing for an individualist to pursue individual pleasure regardless of what is happening to others. But it's another thing for one with a more refined kind of hedonism to be able to pursue pleasure with utter disregard of the kinds of injustice that are so productive of pain rather than pleasure.

If we're talking about social enjoyments. The benefits of society. Then we've got to have some sort of an ordered society to make the pleasurable consequences assured, predictable, stable.

So, what then do we mean by justice? Look at the statement at the top of 466, paragraph 31. 1. Natural justice is an expression of expediency. To prevent one from harming or being harmed by another.

Expression of expediency. 33. There never was absolute justice.

But only in an agreement made in reciprocal intercourse. Providing against the infliction or suffering of harm. So, justice is a purely conventional kind of thing.

And 34. Injustice is not in itself an evil. Nothing intrinsically wrong with injustice.

But only in its consequence. In the terror excited by apprehension. That those appointed to punish will discover the injustice.

So, you have not only a conventional kind of language. Not only a conventional science. But a conventional ethic.

A conventionalist ethic. No other basis. After all, if we live in a world of blind material forces.

A world composed of atoms devoid of any but primary spatial properties. What basis is there for an ethic that goes beyond the pursuit of what pleasure there is in such a world? There's not going to be any. And so, the concern about justice is not because of any intrinsic rights.

Not of any necessity for equal justice for all. But simply as a matter of social utility. And so, a purely conventional kind of arrangement.

With no other checks on it than in terms of its hedonistic consequences. Pretty plain. Well, this is, as I say, the systematically developed kind of hedonism.

Of Epicurus, Lucretius. And we'll find something very, very much like it in the 17th century. When we get to Thomas Hobbes.

Are any of you familiar with Thomas Hobbes, a 17th-century Englishman of letters? Best known now as a political theorist. Who, yes, had a materialistic view of the universe and human nature.

Sort of an atomism, rather like Democritus. A hedonistic ethic. An ethic based on a physiological explanation of pleasure and pain.

A conception of social justice as a conventional arrangement based on a kind of social contract. In order to ensure the kind of self-preservation. What is the minimum necessity in a hedonistic life?

So it provides sort of a paradigm, Lucretius does, of materialistic kinds of systems. One of the things that I think you'll notice throughout the history of thought. Is that a certain kind of metaphysic?

Often, not always, leads to the same kind of ethic. A certain kind of metaphysic leads to the same kind of ethic. Not with complete uniformity.

Sometimes it may open up in two or three other possible directions. But, very frequently, a hedonistic kind of ethic is the result of a materialist metaphysic. And for understandable reasons.

Okay, any questions or comments there? Dr. Chappell. Would Lucretius have acknowledged miracles? And if so, would that be part of the shortcut? I don't think he would have acknowledged miracles. Though I'm not sure he had a clear enough conception of natural law.

To be able to make a distinction between the natural and the miraculous. You see the problem. If what we call natural law is simply a conventional distinction.

Conventional organization of phenomena. Then he could well say of some unusual act. Well, there's another classificatory job that needs to be done.

Now, in Lucretius, it's sometimes hard to distinguish between the poetic tradition. In which a poet invokes the help of the gods. Which Lucretius does.

You'll see. And actual belief. Insofar as he talks about the gods as distinct from invoking them.

He sees them as, at best, physical and mortal beings. With very limited powers. Now, they might have superhuman powers.

But they still can't harass us hereafter. So why be afraid of them? You'll see. In fact, Lucretius says that the main aim of what he is writing.

Is to dispel the fears that have held people in bondage for so long. The bondage of superstitious fear. Anything else? Yeah, Janelle.

Does he have a notion of the soul? He uses the term soul. Like others of the Greeks, he does. He tends to see soul and life.

As essentially synonymous. Unlike vitalists like Aristotle. He does not see the soul as composed of something different than matter.

Soul is still composed of atoms. You'll see. It's not a life force of something.

And unlike the dualism of Plato, the soul is certainly not an eternal immaterial entity. Rational soul. No.

So the soul is simply a different configuration of different kinds of atoms. But as perishable as the body. Since once those small, smooth, round atoms are released from the body, there's nothing to hold them together.

They're just diffused. Okay. David.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I suppose you could say moderation in all things.

I'm not sure we have to learn that from Epicurus. But if you need to, learn it from Epicurus. No, I think that the main thing about Hedonism to keep in mind is that from the standpoint of a Christian ethic, its mistake is not in regarding pleasure as good, but in regarding pleasure as the good.

The highest good. The all-inclusive good. After all, a Christian ethic is not exactly what, um, ascetic in the sense of regarding all enjoyment as bad.

No, hardly. In Democritus and Lucifus. Yes.

They spoke of everything occurring by necessity. Yeah, yeah. Do they have the same concept, or do they think this actually is this world of random and by chance? Yeah, they still speak of causal necessity as a result of material processes, causal processes, collisions of atoms.

But there is that note of randomness, you see. I think it's probably a mistake to seize on a note of randomness or indeterminacy and say, ah, that makes freedom possible. As if freedom is nothing but a random event, you see.

Now, if freedom means anything, it means there is an agent who is able to choose an act without causal necessity, you see. Who's able to choose an act without causal necessity? And while they certainly have a randomness that implies without causal necessity, at least without predictability, I'm not sure they have any agent who is free to choose an act.

There's a sense in which a random act is still part of a causal chain. It may be caused to go off in a random direction. But the causal chain is still there.

Yeah. Incidentally, in the 20th century, when the Heisenberg principle of indeterminacy was discovered, in the 1920s, there were some people, like John Dewey, in fact, who seized on the Heisenberg principle and said, "Ah, this shows that human freedom is possible." It's sort of the same move that Epicurus makes, Lucretius makes.

Familiar with the Heisenberg principle of indeterminacy? That, in terms of submolecular behaviour, it's impossible to predict, within a certain range, both the direction and the velocity of both particles that are involved. And there have been two constructions put upon the Heisenberg principle, which might also be put upon the indeterminacy in Lucretius. One is that there is an actual indeterminacy, an actual randomness in nature.

And the other is that our instrumentation has unbeknown effects so that we're unable to predict. In other words, it may be just a confession of scientific ignorance. And I suppose you could say the same about the Lucretian swerve.

Is it an actual indeterminacy, or is it simply that we don't know the cause? And it's hard to see how to settle that one. Okay, let's move on to the second on our list, the Cynic and Stoic. And here again, we back up to the Socratic schools and say something about the Cynics, yes, around 400 B.C. You might want to take a look at the preamble that Kaufman has to his section here on the Hellenists, because he has a long, juicy paragraph about the two main Cyrenaics.

Now take it back, did I say the two main Cyrenaics? The two main Cynics, namely, I have to check the name, it slips my mind. Slippery mind, Antisthenes and Diogenes. Antisthenes was, I suppose, what we would call today counterculture, to the fullest extent.

To the extent that he would have nothing to do with normal living arrangements, and made a bathtub his home. Shunning all organized society and social institutions. Maintaining that individuals should be completely self-sufficient and independent.

So much so that his lifestyle earned him the name of an animal, the dog. And of course, the Greek word for a dog is the word koune, and it's from koune that the word Cynic is derived. So the Cynics literally had gone to the dogs, you see.

They were regarded by virtue of their complete counterculture, counterestablishment lifestyle. As virtual, I wouldn't say outcasts, but at least they had stepped outside, living outside. Diogenes in a similar fashion.

It's said that Alexander the Great had heard about Diogenes and went to talk to him and asked if there was anything to do with him. To which Diogenes responded, yes, get out of the light. That was his way of treating authority.

Get out of my light. Get out of the sunshine. Get out of the way.

You're blocking the light. That completely anti-establishment kind of attitude. The main significance of those Cynics, then, is in their appeal back to nature.

Back to nature. What is fitting for us by nature? And they represent a bit of a tension that had developed even in Socrates and Plato's day in Athens. A tension between nature and custom or convention.

You see, phusis versus nomos. Nomos, meaning law or custom. You see.

Aristotle's ethic was an ethic of phusis, by nature this, by nature that. You see, his whole emphasis is on nature. Aristotle's philosophy is likewise rooted in the nature of a human being with the three elements of the soul and their appropriate virtues.

But the Cynics, no, they likewise are concerned about, yes, back to nature, but nature in a different sense. They see the concepts of nature in Plato and Aristotle as simply Greek conventions. Did you feel that about Aristotle's virtues? That the particular virtues he names are, in case after case, not all of them, but in many cases, the virtues of Greek aristocracy.

You see. Magnificence is one of the virtues. Well, that sounds like the old Homeric aristocratic virtues.

You see. Well, the Cynics apparently saw through this. And so they really want to get back to nature, to a much simpler, independent lifestyle.

Without the complexity of the social structures. Which had grown up obviously in Athenian culture, and which Plato and Aristotle were simply reforming but maintaining. The individual in his inner self is self-sufficient, and we do not need property.

We do not need governments. We do not need marriage and family. Complete independence.

Notice that the term Cynic has come down to us with a somewhat different meaning. Fair enough? Different and yet similar. The similarity? Yeah, somebody who is cynical of established ways of doing things.

Okay. Someone who is cynical about certain established beliefs. You see the Cynic in that sense.

But different in that the ancient Cynic was advocating more of a positive alternative. The self-sufficient individual. Getting back to a very simple kind of natural existence.

Without the trappings of culture. If you like, you can see the underlying question as the question of whether the troubles that human beings have in this world are products of culture. Or whether they are products of nature, including human nature.

Now I think it is fair to say that Plato saw the troubles in a society as products of human nature. That needs to be rationally controlled. Whereas the Cynics seem to see the troubles as the products of culture.

So we need to get back to nature. The Cynics want nature to save us from culture. Plato and Aristotle want a culture to save us from our nature.

The other way around. Okay. Well, that Cynic influence provided, I suppose, you would say, the moral starting point.

Which the Stoics subsequently picked up on. The emphasis on the Stoical attitude, after all. Immune to inconvenience and self-sufficient.

Now, the thing which was necessary, however, to produce the Stoic philosophy. To produce the Stoic philosophy. Was not just the Cynic ethic.

But it was Heraclitus metaphysic. So if you like Heraclitus and the Cynics, together they produced the Stoics. In a similar way to how Democritus and the Cyrenaics together led to the Epicureans.

Get it? Now, what about Heraclitus then? Well, I hope you remember that Heraclitus was one of those double-aspect thinkers. There are two sides to nature. An active and a passive.

There is order, and there is change. There is the Logos structure that gives ordered unity. And there's a world of fiery vapor changing its manifestation in an ongoing process.

It's never the same twice. Now, essentially, what the Stoics do is to adopt Heraclitus. Cosmology is metaphysical.

We live in a world of change, which goes through cycles. Of fiery disintegration in which it's all consumed with fire. And then it is gradually rebuilt.

Renewed. And then followed by another fiery integration. And the thing that gives order in all of this cyclical process of cosmic change is an ordering principle.

That Heraclitus called, yup, Logos. Logos. Watch this.

The early church picked up on the Stoic Logos consciously. Deliberately. Taking the term from the Stoics.

We'll be talking about that in a couple of weeks. The Stoic movement itself went through quite a long history. There was an early Stoic movement represented by a man named Zeno.

Cleanthes. And Chrysippus. These were the early Greek Stoics.

The early Greek Stoics in the 3rd century BC. There was a middle period that lasted for a further couple of hundred years. And then a flourishing of Roman Stoicism.

Roman Stoicism that involved Seneca. Epictetus. And the emperor Marcus Aurelius.

And had a tremendous influence on Cicero. Because of Cicero's writings in political philosophy and legal philosophy. And the shaping of Roman jurisprudence had a tremendous influence then on the shaping of that whole tradition of Roman law.

Which was then transmitted into the Middle Ages. So, political and legal philosophy in the Middle Ages and modern times was profoundly influenced by the Stoics. So you have quite a history.

Often divided into three parts. History of Stoicism. The 3rd century, the Greek beginnings.

A middle period of assimilation. And then the Roman period, the first two centuries AD.