The Unique Perspectives Of Life Shared By Diogenes, Epicurus, And Zeno

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Philosophy tries to present the meaning of life using knowledge, existence and reality. Many philosophers have presented their philosophies, trying to define life through their perspectives. This includes Diogenes, Epicurus and Zeno, three Athenian philosophers with unique life perspectives. This paper will explore their theories and provide criticism of those theories.

Diogenes Of Sinope

You cannot say that you have truly lived if you spent your life following the conventions of life, lavished yourself with luxuries and were tempted to have more. This greed-filled and unsatiated life was proof of shallow existence that proved that you just wasted your time on this earth without learning its true meaning. This was not a free life but the life of a slave who was bound to the materialistic view of the world [1]. Cynicism is the way of life that allows its followers to be truly free and live an independent life. It allows you to see beyond the colourful trap of the materialistic world. The ability to control one's desires can lead to excellent behaviour. If a person rejects all that is unnecessary in life, he will put himself on the right path of virtue. People think that it is impossible to live without these luxuries, but I have proved to them otherwise, as I owned nothing and was still able to sustain myself. People who think such a life is impossible or hard to live are cowards, as they are extremely attached to their shallow pleasures. Look beyond this existence, and you will find all that you are looking for. I used to own just a cup as I believed that I needed it to drink water, but I was proven by a boy who used his hands to scoop up the water to drink. The boy was indeed wise, and I learned from him, so I threw the cup away as it was no longer necessary. If you are materialistically self-sufficient, then you are spiritually self-sufficient [2].

Epicurus believes that to live a happy life, you just need to surround yourself with your loved ones and find happiness in the simplicity of life. However, he, too, is weak as he cannot let go of these pleasures, so he will not know the meaning of life. If you are always in the company of others, you will not be able to find the truth. Attachment of any kind is unnecessary as it stands in the path of virtue, and if Epicurus wants to achieve it, he will have to let go of all of his attachments.

Epicurus

Human nature implores us to find true happiness and peace so that we can say that we have truly lived our lives. Happiness can be achieved if you are surrounded by your loved ones. You do not need immense wealth and fortune to feel truly happy, as when you possess little, you only attract those

who truly love you. Depending on each other can bring a sense of security and love; these feelings cannot be bought, only felt through true means. When a person has led a happy and peaceful life, he holds no fear of death; he would welcome it as he had lived with all his might. The end of life will be peaceful as well as death ends all. After the elimination of fear, other negative emotions like anxiety, sadness, anger, etc. are also eliminated. This opens the doors to experiencing true pleasure, both physical and mental, which allows them to feel happy. If people can experience moments that allow them to be happy regularly, then they will always be in a state of peace. Living as a loving community of friends will allow us to fulfil our ethical goals. Your loved ones give you the strength to weather the storm and achieve your life's purpose. Achievement of one's purpose in life allows one to feel fulfilled, and this sense of achievement contributes to peace of mind. A simple life allows you to truly experience life, and the company of your loved ones allows you to experience true happiness and peace of mind [3].

Diogenes, you may think that liberating oneself from all earthly bounds will allow one to truly understand the meaning of life, but you forget that you need to experience life to understand life. Your philosophy shuns everything and considers every pleasure or attachment as unnecessary. How can you say that with confidence if you have never truly experienced these things? You have no earthly experience; you just have contempt for everything and everyone. You never experienced happiness as you never sat in the company of friends who loved you. Your mind was always in turmoil as you looked upon people with judgment and contempt. Did you ever reach out to these people to make them understand your perspective on life? No, you did not, as you believed that none of them were honest people. I agree that you should live a simple life and eliminate all that causes you to feel negative emotions, but shunning everything will make your life devoid of happiness. Your philosophy asks people to leave all that they love, which will cause them extreme sadness, as only through the company of loved ones can a person survive the hardships of life. These hardships do not feel like a trail when you have someone to bear the burden with you; alone, you will have nothing to live for, and therefore, you will also lack the will to live.

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Life cannot be explained by one philosophy alone, as it is the perspective of one person. Every human being develops their philosophy (whether they are aware of it or not) through their life experiences and beliefs. They use these philosophies to navigate through life, and there might be other people whose philosophy falls in line with someone else's philosophy, but it does not mean that one philosophy can be applied to every human being. In this regard, Diogenes' philosophy cannot be applied to every human being as it is an extreme form of mystical existence. It does look appealing to leave everything and live without any dependencies, but it will not be long before people will start to lose their minds as they will not be able to cope with such a lifestyle. Human beings need to have a sense of belonging as it gives them a purpose to live and look forward to the next day. If they do not have it, they will lose the will to live. In this sense, Epicurus' philosophy makes more sense and can be applied to our own lives. Surrounding yourself with your loved ones can indeed make you feel happy

and give your life a purpose. However, you cannot eliminate negative emotions from life, as some unavoidable incidents can invoke these emotions. You can certainly minimize the possibility of negative emotions by removing people who put you down or changing self-destructive habits. Uncertainty is a part of life, and some aspects of it cannot be controlled; thinking otherwise is the musings of a naïve person. In today's society, many aspects cannot be avoided or solved through these philosophical ideas, but some ideas of Epicurus can help in leading a happy life.

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1. Joshua J. Mark, "Diogenes of Sinope – World History Encyclopedia," accessed December 8, 2021, https://www.worldhistory.org/Diogenes_of_Sinope/. ↑
2. James Fieser, "3: Hellenistic Philosophy," January 1, 2021, https://www.utm.edu/staff/jfieser/class/110/3-hellenistic.htm. ↑
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