

STOICISM IN YOGA TEXT

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Abstract: The ideal way of life is a question perused by many thinkers. Western philosophy, as well as Indian philosophy, has dwelled on this. A common thread runs through philosophical schools of stoicism and yoga. Several pieces of evidence can be seen in both schools of philosophy to prove this similarity. The concepts of stoicism, like the dual powers leading to creation, the concept of eudemonia, restraint of sense organs, and control of desire, find their equivalent concepts in yoga texts. Stoicism can be seen intertwined with yoga philosophy. This article tries to bring this comparison of yoga philosophy and stoicism to the fore.

How to live one's life is a question that many thinkers have perused throughout the history of man. Philosophy is one such discipline that tries to answer this universal question. Philosophy can be understood as "the study of knowledge," from the meaning of the Greek root words "*Philo*," meaning "love," and "*Sophia*," meaning "knowledge" Philosophy can be defined as "investigation of the nature, causes or principles of reality, knowledge, or values, based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1987). It is also defined as "the study of ultimate nature of existence, reality, knowledge and goodness, as discoverable by human reasoning" (Allen, 2007). It was originally used by the ancient Greeks to mean the pursuit of knowledge for its sake and encompassed all streams of knowledge, like the arts, sciences, and religion.

Philosophy is divided into four main branches: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. Two more branches are also considered: logic and political philosophy (Nietzsche, 1968). Metaphysics refers to the study of existence and the nature of reality. Epistemology is considered to mean the study of knowledge. Ethics is studying how people should act and what is good and valuable. Aesthetics is the study of basic philosophical questions about art and beauty. Logic is the study of sound reasoning by valid inference and demonstration. Political philosophy studies how people should interact in a fair society.

I. Introduction to Stoicism

Many isms were born out of the different periods of Western philosophy. Mention can be made of Cynicism, Existentialism, Stoicism, Epicureanism, Platonism, and many more. Stoicism is one among many schools that evolved. It is a Hellenistic school of philosophy initiated by the Greek philosopher Zeno of Citium around 300 BC. This school of philosophy teaches self-control and fortitude to overcome destructive emotions to develop clear judgment, inner calm, and the ultimate goal of freedom from suffering. It was earlier known as "Zionism," after its pioneer, Zeno. However, it was later replaced by the term "stoicism," which derives from the "*Stoa Poikile*" (Painted Porch), a colonnade decorated with mythical and

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historical battle scenes in Athens, where Zeno used to preach his philosophy. It is divided into three phases: Early Stoa- from Zeno to Antipater, Middle Stoa of Panaetius, Posidonius, and Late Stoa of Rufus, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. Most of the teachings of the earlier philosophers were lost to time, and works of the later philosophers exist, though, in essence, the teachings of the pioneers have traversed down to the current stock of works on stoicism.

II. Basic Tenets of Stoicism

Stoicism has evolved a lot from its inception till the later phases. Some basic tenets of stoicism have remained to date. Stoicism believes in restraining the senses and leading a virtuous life to attain the ultimate goal of life- true happiness or *eudaimonia*. In order to lead a virtuous life, one needs wisdom and intelligence to choose the right course of action. *Ataraxia* (equanimity) is an important quality to inculcate in a stoic. Emotional upheavals should not carry away a stoic and should not react in the spur of the moment. A stoic has to use his intellect and make the right decision. He has to act in such a way that it is beneficial not only to him but should have the welfare of society in mind. He should act in conformity with the laws of nature and follow reason. He should accept incidents in life as they happen and not judge under the influence of emotions. One should have the discrimination to assess the situation neutrally. One should accept whatever happens, not grieve for things he cannot control or change. Nietzsche aptly refers to this attitude of stoicism as “*amor fati*.” Nietzsche, a modern philosopher, was not particularly in agreement with stoic philosophy. However, his thoughts on the eternal recurrence and acceptance of fate align with the stoic principle of accepting destiny and not grieving over the adversities of life but being indifferent to it. Ryan Holiday, in his book, “The Daily Stoic,” explains thus:

...and the most practical stoics take it a step further. Instead of simply accepting what happens, they urge us to actually enjoy what has happened- whatever it is. Nietzsche, many centuries later, coined the perfect expression to capture this idea: *amor fati* (a love of fate). It’s not just accepting, it’s loving everything that happens. (Ryan Holiday 2016).

Nietzsche explained, about his love of fate, thus:

My formula for greatness in a
Human being is *amor fati*: that
one wants nothing to be different,
Not forward, not backward, not in
All eternity. Not merely bear what
Is necessary, still less conceal it...
But love it. (Nietzsche 1968)

A Roman Stoic, Marcus Aurelius, says that if any external thing pains one, it is not this thing that disturbs, but one’s own judgment about it. Moreover, it is in one’s power to wipe out this judgment now.

Stoicism talks about the dichotomy of control. It believes that certain things are under our control and others over which we do not have any control. One

should be aware of this dichotomy of control and act accordingly. As Epictetus asserts, “the chief task in life is simply this: to identify and separate matters so that I can clearly say to myself which, are externals not under my control, and which have to do with the choices I actually control. Where then do I look for good and evil? Not to uncontrollable externals, but within myself to the choices that are my own...” Another essential practice of stoic thinkers is to write down their day-to-day matters in the form of journals. Indeed, Marcus Aurelius’ “Meditations” belong to the genre of hypomnemata, which are advice to oneself and awareness of one’s daily thoughts and activities. Stoics believed that misfortune should be acknowledged beforehand and that one should prepare oneself for any untoward incident before it even occurs. Seneca advises thus:

it is in times of security that the spirit should be preparing itself for difficult times; while fortune is bestowing its favors on it is then is the time for it to be strengthened against its rebuff.

Stoicism teaches that perceptions have to be trained. It is how we choose to see things. Even adversity could be a blessing in disguise sent forth to bring out certain good attributes in the individual. Marcus Aurelius explains, “choose not to be harmed and you won’t feel harmed. Don’t feel harmed and you haven’t been.” Stoics also followed the ancient practice of “memento mori,” or meditating on mortality. Stoics urged that remembering that one is mortal and death is inevitable helps one realize the ephemeral nature of one’s life and the futility of most human endeavors for name, fame, wealth, and such things of mundane life. Seneca, thus, opines: “Let us prepare our minds if we’d come to the very end of life. Let us postpone nothing. Let us balance life’s books each day...the one who puts the finishing touches on their life each day is never short of time.” The practice of “premeditatio malorum” is a continuation of the training of perception. In this practice, the stoics practiced imagining the worst possible scenario to be well prepared if anything terrible happens. It ultimately will train a stoic to be balanced and unaffected when confronted by misfortune.

III. Introduction to Yoga

Indian philosophy is referred to as *Shad darshanas* or six philosophies. It is classified into *Astika* (orthodox) and *Nastika* (unorthodox). *Astika* refers to those philosophies which believe in the authority of the *Veda* (ancient texts of India). It includes *Nyaya*, *Vaishesika*, *Samkhya*, *Yoga*, *Mimamsa* and *Vedanta*. *Nastika* refers to philosophies that refute the authority of the *Vedas*, the existence of *Atman* (soul), and the existence of *Ishvara* (God). It includes Buddhism, Jainism, *Charvaka*, and *Ajivika*. Among the *Astika* schools of philosophy, yoga, and Samkhya are the sister philosophies, which are inextricably intertwined. Samkhya is like the theory aspect, and yoga is the practical aspect. Indeed yoga is called “shesvara samkhya,” which means theistic Samkhya. Samkhya philosophy gives the metaphysical knowledge of the universe. On the other hand, yoga gives the practical tool to attain enlightenment along with a philosophical basis. Yoga comes from the Sanskrit root, “*yuj*,” which means “to unite,” this union refers to the union of the individual soul and Universal Soul or the Supreme Godhead. This union implies the ultimate goal of life, that is, Self-Realization. The same

notion is portrayed in the definitions of yoga as given in most authoritative texts of yoga. According to the traditional text, Patanjali Yoga Sutra, *yoga* is defined as the “cessation of the modifications of the mind,” thus culminating in the zenithal position of Kaivalya (solitude). Another text, Bhagavad Gita, defines *yoga* as “equanimity is yoga” and “skill in action is yoga.” *Yoga* is an umbrella term that includes a set of techniques to mold the individual and develop various aspects to reach the ultimate goal of self-realization. The techniques mentioned are *asana* (postures), *pranayama* (breath regulation), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of senses), *shatkriyas* (internal cleansing techniques), *bandhas* (body locks), *mudras* (gestures), *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana* (meditation) and *Samadhi* (liberation). Each of these techniques mentioned here, in one way or the other, brings the individual closer to the final goal of liberation.

IV. Stoicism and Yoga

Yoga philosophy derives its metaphysical aspect from Samkhya philosophy. It talks about two entities, those being *prakriti* and *purusha*. *Prakriti* is “the primordial material matrix of the physical universe, the undifferentiated plenitude of being.” On the other hand, *Purusha* is the “innumerable conscious souls or selves embedded within it.” Moreover, the union of these two will lead to the evolution of the whole creation. The evolutes of *prakriti* include *manas* (perceptive faculty of mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *ahankara* (ego-sense), *panchamahabhutas* (five great elements-earth, water, fire, air and space), *panchatanmatras* (essence of smell, taste, form, touch, sound), *jnanendriyas* (organs of knowledge- eyes, nose, ears, tongue and skin) and *karmendriyas* (organs of action- hands, feet, tongue, organs of elimination and organs of procreation). (Satischandra Chatterjee 2017). A similar metaphor is seen in the Stoic philosophy of two principles:

...within the corporeal, they (Stoics) recognized two principles, matter and force, i.e., the material and the Deity permeating and influencing it...considered God and matter as one identical substance, which, on the side of its passive and changeable capacity they call matter, and on the side of its active and changeless energy God....

A similar explanation can be seen in Marcus Aurelius’ Meditations:

...cause and material he means the two elements of these compounds- inert substance and animating pneuma- which are united so long as the object itself exists. When the object perishes, the pneuma animated it is reabsorbed into the logos as a whole. This process of destruction and reintegration happens to individual objects at every moment. It also happens on a larger scale to the entire universe, which at vast intervals is entirely consumed by fire (a process known as ekpyrosis) and then regenerated.... (Hadot, 1998).

The concept of pneuma is called “*Purusha*” in Samkhya philosophy. This duality of pneuma and matter of stoicism is slightly different from the duality of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*; in the sense that unlike matter, which is inert and inanimate, *Prakriti* is animate and has an intelligence of its own. *Prakriti*, inherently, has the three qualities of *Sattva* (purity), *Rajas* (dynamism), and *Tamas* (inertia). These

three qualities and their interaction bring Prakriti's evolution into the 25 *tattvas* (entities). The process of "destruction" that is referred to here is similar to the notion of "*pralay*," as described in Shiv Purana (Chaturvedi n.d.). It is believed that the whole Creation undergoes total Dissolution (*pralaya*), and everything in the Creation is burnt in the fire only to be born again. Kaka Bhushunda, a mythical crow, which had attained enlightenment, describes many such instances of Dissolution and Creation. He had witnessed many a Dissolution and Creation but remained unaffected as he withdrew himself from the material aspect and remained in his astral body. He could accomplish this feat by ceasing the movement of *prana* by *kumbhaka* (holding of breath) (Bharati, 2002). Even the concept of God, as described by the Stoic metaphysics, is analogous to the concept of Cosmic Consciousness or Brahman. Stoics have described this God as "a living God, who penetrates and fills the universe with his own life." This description finds a similarity in the way Brahman is described in the Kena Upanishad, where it is the Supreme power that is the main driving force pervading the whole Creation and willing all entities to perform their ordained duties through the powers sourced from the Brahman.

...that which thinks not by the mind, that by which the mind is thought, know
That to be Brahman and not this which men follow after here. I.5 Kena
Upanishad (Aurobindo, 2001).

V. Eudaimonia- the Supreme Bliss

Stoicism stresses that one should practice self-control. It says one should lead a virtuous life in harmony with nature to attain the ultimate goal of life- eudaimonia or bliss. This bliss is of a higher value than the mundane happiness that one experiences in our daily life. Stoicism believes that being virtuous is equivalent to being in bliss, and virtue alone can lead to eudaimonia. This concept is at par with the notion of "*ananda*," which can be roughly translated as bliss. Taittiriya Upanishad explicitly mentions it as the fabric which makes up the anandamaya kosha or the bliss sheath of existence. In this Upanishad, the disciple, in his quest to find the answer to the question, "what is Brahman?" discovers the five layers of existence. *Annamaya kosha* (physical layer), *pranamaya kosha* (vital energy layer), *manomaya kosha* (emotional layer), *vijnanamaya kosha* (intellectual layer), and *anandamaya kosha* (bliss layer) (Sharvananda, 1921). This bliss layer is the source of all happiness and is forever balanced. An individual is truly happy and healthy only when all the layers are balanced, and disturbance arises in the other layers but never in the *anandamaya kosha*. One can attain this bliss by regulating his senses, emotions, and intellect, which can be done through yoga. It is said that when an individual can shed false identifications with the evolutes of *Prakriti*, he can fathom the true nature of the "Atman" or Soul, which is of the nature of bliss. *Prakriti* and its evolutes exist for the soul or "*Purusha*" to experience and to be able to realize the true nature of *Purusha* and be in a state of bliss. According to Samkhya and Yoga philosophy, an individual can reach the state of "*kaivalya*," the state of solitude, using yoga. Through the practice of yoga, one can overcome the afflictions and rend the false identifications with the products of *Prakriti*, those being – the mind, intellect, ego-sense, the physical body and be able to recognize the true nature of the "*atman*," which is bliss (Chatterjee, 2017).

VI. Temperance

The self-control or self-restraint that is considered to be the trademark attribute of a stoic can be compared to the concept of *pratyahara*- withdrawal of sense as explained in Patanjali Yoga Sutra:

Pratyahara, withdrawal from sense objects, occurs when the senses do not come into contact with their respective sense objects. It corresponds, as it were, to the nature of the mind (when it is withdrawn from the sense objects) II.54 Patanjali Yoga Sutras (Bryant, 2009).

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the senses have been compared to the limbs of a tortoise which can be withdrawn within, and this withdrawal of senses leads to wisdom (Tapsyananda, 2003). A similar analogy can be seen in the *Katha Upanishad*, where the body is equated to a chariot, the horses are the senses, the reins are the mind, and the charioteer is the intellect. It implies that the intellect should have enough control over the mind to keep the senses under control. The conjunction of the sense organs with the sense objects leads to the experience of pleasure or pain, which in turn leads to attachment (*raga*) or aversion (*dvesha*), respectively. Patanjali specifically warns that these afflictions of the mind (*raga*, *dvesha*) should be attenuated to prevent disturbance of equanimity of the mind (Bryant, 2009). Epictetus says on a similar note:

...a wish when unconfined
Finds disappointment surely hang behind,...
...thy care should be to limit thy desires,
Nor covet aught save what thy state requires... (Talbot, 1872)

An echo of this teaching can be seen in *Bhagavad Gita*, where Shri Krishna exhorts Arjuna to keep his senses under control as indulgence in sense objects brings forth new desires and disturbs the tranquility of mind (“Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita, the Scripture of Mankind: The Text in Devanagari with ... - Swami Tapasyananda - Google Books” n.d.). The notion of non-covetousness and austerity (save what thy state requires) is emphasized in Yoga sutras and Hatha Yoga Pradipika. Patanjali talks about non-covetousness (*asteya*) as one of the codes of conduct, which one has to follow in all situations irrespective of the time or place. It means not having a desire for others’ belongings. II. 37. PYS (Bryant, 2009). These vows must be observed to attain discriminative discernment, which helps enlightenment. Austerity can be seen in the concept of *aparigraha* and *tapa*, as explained in the yoga sutras. *Aparigraha* is the principle that instructs one to forego unnecessary possessions. II.39.PYS (Bryant, 2009). *Tapa* or austerity is one of the observances, as Patanjali puts it. He adjures that a yogi should practice austerity. He should lead a life of minimal requirements so that one does not indulge in pleasing the senses and feeding desires, which are believed to distract one from the path to the goal. Yoga Vashistha emphasizes that a yogi should abstain from unnecessary desire and lead a life of simplicity. In Yoga Vashistha, Rama speaks about the ill effects of desire thus:

of all the ills of worldly life, it is desire alone that gives lasting grief...desire alone makes the best man worthless as a straw in a minute, though his wisdom is as high as Mount Meru.... Chapter 1 Verse 38, 40 (Bharati, 2002).

Hatha Yoga Pradipika also enjoins that a yogi should observe “tapa” for success in the yoga journey. Another observance, “*santosha*,” is contentment with whatever one has at his disposal and not coveting anything more than one needs. As Patanjali explains, the effect of observing *santosha* is “*sukha*,” or happiness. II. 42 PYS (Bryant, 2009). It is in agreement with the stoic tenet of self-restraint to attain bliss.

VII. Virtues

Another important tenet of stoicism is to lead a life of virtue. Plato referred to the four cardinal virtues: justice, courage, temperance, and wisdom. Stoicism has followed the platonic list of virtue. The philosophical understanding of the Greek word for virtue, “*arete*,” is excellence. It implied skill or excellence in essence. In stoicism, the “wise man” is named “*Sapiens*.” The *sapiens* are expected to have knowledge of the laws of nature, which would allow them to perform well. “Virtue is the perfect adjustment of all the desires and acts of the soul...the submission of will to the universal and persistent logos, the divine reason and providence....” The first virtue, justice, is the ability to do the right thing, following the laws of nature and conforming with logos. For justice to develop, one needs to have sound knowledge of nature and the discriminative faculty which goads one to do the right action. Epictetus preaches that one should

guard well, thy balanced mind
From Passion free, to Reason e'er inclined.

This concept of “reason” is comparable to the concept of “*buddhi*,” also referred to as “*Viveka*” in other references. It refers to the faculty of mind responsible for discriminating between right and wrong. Several texts of yoga talk about the significance of intellect as a tool to achieve equanimity of mind. Patanjali, also known as the “father of yoga,” refers to this concept as *Viveka* and espouses that the practice of yoga culminates in discriminative discernment or *Viveka*. II. 28. PYS. Moreover, this “uninterrupted discriminative discernment leads to liberation.” II.26. PYS (Bryant, 2009).

It is the same as “*vijnana*,” of the fourth sheath of existence, according to Taittiriya Upanishad (Sharvananda, 1921). It is the intellect that helps an individual to make the right decision. Samkhya also talks about *Buddhi* as the faculty of mind, which is the first evolute of *Prakriti* to emerge in the Genesis theory of Samkhya. A story is often used to elucidate the significance of the different faculties of the mind as depicted in the Samkhya Philosophy. A person goes to a garden. Upon seeing a beautiful rose flower in full bloom, he feels “such a beauty.” It is *manas* (perceptive faculty of mind) at work. Then, he says, “I like the rose, I want it for myself.” It is *ahankara* (ego-sense) in action showing the I-ness and possessive nature. When his hand moves to pluck the flower, something within him says, “This is not right. This is not your garden. You should not pluck the flower.” It is *Buddhi*, discrimination playing its role of

giving the right sense of judgment. It tells us what and when to do, considering the ethos, and the laws of nature.

Courage is the second virtue according to Plato's notion of virtue. Marcus Aurelius' "Meditations" has a common thread traversing the whole composition, which is self-improvement—courage or fortitude features as an essential virtue, as explained by Marcus. In the chapters dealing with "Consolation" to various persons, Marcus urges them to show courage and not give in to grief.

When jarred, unavoidably, by
Circumstances revert at once
To yourself and don't lose the
Rhythm more than you can help.
You'll have a better grasp of
Harmony if you keep going back to it (Hadot, 1998).

Seneca also emphasizes on fortitude thus,

In the meantime, cling tooth
And nail to the following rule:
Not to give in to adversity, not
To trust prosperity, and always
Take full note of fortune's habit of
Behaving just as she pleases.

On a similar note, Shri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, exhorts Arjuna to be courageous and perform his duty. Shri Krishna says:

Engage yourself in action with the mind steadfast in Yoga. Abandon attachments, O Arjuna, and be unperturbed in success and failure. This unperturbed sameness in all conditions is yoga." II. 48 BG (Tapsyananda, 2003).

One endowed with this unperturbed evenness of mind abandons the effects of both good and bad actions even here itself. Therefore strive for this state of yoga. Yoga is skill in action. II. 50 BG (Tapsyananda, 2003).

Vashistha is also found to adjure the melancholic Rama to overcome his sadness and pursue knowledge. Being subject to emotional upheavals only drains one's energy and often leads to wrong decisions. The way to overcome suffering is to pursue knowledge. Epictetus, in his "Enchiridion," says, "let not sorrow wring thy aching heart when things once valued founder and depart" (Talbot, 1872). Temperance is the same as self-restraint. In several yoga texts, it is often repeated that the senses, if left unfettered, breeds desire and bring about irrational thinking, loss of discrimination, and, ultimately, self-destruction. The Patanjali Yoga sutras, Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Vashistha, and Upanishads have talked about restraining the senses to attain the Supreme goal of enlightenment. Stoics have stressed this quality as one of utmost importance to lead a life of virtue. As a result, the word "stoic," in common parlance, has come to mean "indifference to emotions and an unfeeling person," which may be less appropriate and does not encompass the definition of Stoic in philosophy.

Wisdom is to know the right thing and use it to attain a state of equanimity. The stoics named the “wise man” “sapiens.” The Delphic oracle had declared Socrates to be the wisest man of all. The notion of sapiens in stoicism is ethics in action. He has expertise in many fields. He is balanced, practical, and enjoys worldly life without being attached. Epictetus urges his followers to be like Socrates, implying that one should strive to be wise. Donald Robertson describes the qualities of a sage thus:

...is supremely virtuous, a perfect human being...he has attained perfect Happiness and fulfilment (eudaimonia). He lives in total harmony with himself, the rest of mankind, and Nature as a whole, because he follows reason and accepts his fate graciously...has risen above irrational desires and emotions...completely unafraid of his own death. He possesses supreme practical wisdom, justice and benevolence, courage and self-discipline. This description is very similar to the description of “*sthitaprajna*,” one of stable intelligence. He is described to be someone who is unaffected by dualities of sorrow and joy, has abandoned all desires, finds satisfaction in himself and devoid of attachment, fear or anger. (Robertson, 2018).

Michael Frede further stresses that “the stoic sage does not gain his equanimity by shedding human concern, but by coming to realize what these concerns are meant to be, and hence what they ought to be, namely how nature maintains its natural, rational order.” Stoics deny passions to the sage, which is required to have “*apatheia*” (indifference). Passions are so powerful that they can curtail and endanger the rationality of human beings. Bhagavad Gita defines the sage as someone who has allayed his passions by being detached and equanimous. He has been referred to as “*Sthitaprajna*.” His attributes are “*yogastha*”, and “*brahmisthiti*,” meaning one who is established in the practice of yoga and who constantly dwells on the Supreme Godhead, Brahman. II. 48. BG, II. 72. BG (Tapsyananda, 2003). Bhagavad Gita describes the steady progression of uncontrolled emotions and desires, ultimately leading to destruction. Anger is shown to corrupt discrimination leading to wrong decisions and destruction of self:

In one who dwells longingly on sense objects, an inclination towards them is generated. This inclination develops into desire, and desire begets anger. Anger generates delusion, and delusion results in loss of memory. Loss of memory brings about the destruction of discriminative intelligence, and loss of discriminative intelligence spells ruin to a man.” II.62-63 (Tapsyananda 2003).

Seneca in several places has shown intolerance for anger. He believes it reverses the virtuous development. “Infatuation makes people lose their mind and behaves in unseemly ways. Epistulae Morales Seneca 116.5 (Seneca, 1925).

VIII. Mindfulness

Stoic philosophers stress that an individual should be aware of every action he performs and every thought that comes to his mind. In this way, the person can measure each of his actions and follow the principles of stoicism. Stoicism enjoins mindfulness as a principle that one has to follow. Donald Robertson

espouses that one should be mindful of his actions and thoughts as these come under the category of things that man can willfully control. Robertson says:

Stoics should continually be mindful of their volition. Their voluntary thoughts and actions are, by definition, the only things completely under their control (Robertson, 2018).

Seneca, the stoic statesman philosopher, has incorporated the concept of mindfulness as a part of his life. He explains thus:

When the light has been removed and my wife has fallen silent, aware of this habit that's now mine, I examine my entire day and go back over what I've done and said, hiding nothing from myself, passing nothing by. For why should I fear any consequence from my mistakes, when I'm able to say, "See that you don't do it again, but now forgive you."

In the book *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Arnold I Davidson sees Marcus Aurelius using a specific schema in his "Meditations," a text most often not easily understood due to its seemingly disorganized structure (Hadot, 1995). He emphasizes that Marcus is following the genre of *hypomnemata* and is describing a spiritual exercise in his writing. He says that Marcus has used the three *topoi* as elaborated by Epictetus. He explains in this way:

These three disciplines of life are truly the key to the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius. It is in fact around each of them that the different dogmas...are organized, are crystallized. To the discipline of judgment are linked the dogmas that affirm the freedom of judgment, the possibility that man has to criticize and modify his own thought; around the discipline that directs our attitude with regard to external events are gathered all the theorems on the causality of universal Nature; lastly, the discipline of action is nourished by all the theoretical propositions relative to the mutual attraction that unites reasonable beings. Finally, one discovers that behind an apparent disorder, one can uncover, in the *Meditations*, an extremely rigorous conceptual system. (Hadot, 1995).

Hadot further explains that "the spiritual exercises" can be described in the context of Hellenistic and Roman schools of philosophy.

It is a concrete attitude and determinate life-style, which engages the whole existence. The philosophical act is not situated merely on the cognitive level, but on that of the self and of being. It is a progress which causes us to be more fully, and makes us better. It is a conversion which turns our entire life upside down, changing the life of the person who goes through it. It raises the individual from an inauthentic condition of life, darkened by unconsciousness and harassed by worry, to an authentic state of life, in which he attains self-consciousness, an exact vision of the world, inner peace, and freedom...we do possess two lists of spiritual exercises. They do not completely overlap, but they do have the merit of giving us a fairly complete panorama of Stoico-Platonic inspired philosophical therapeutics. One of these lists enumerates the following elements: research (*zetesis*), thorough investigation (*skepsis*), reading (*anagnosis*), listening (*akroasis*), attention (*prosoche*), self-mastery (*enkrateia*), and indifference to

indifferent things. ..meditations (*meletai*), therapies of the passions, remembrance of good things, self-mastery (*enkrateia*), and the accomplishment of duties.

Mindfulness is a principle that runs deep in the Yoga philosophy. In Yoga philosophy, it comprises being aware of the mind-stuff, the working of the mind, and techniques of cessation of the modifications of the mind to attain the ultimate goal of liberation. The whole text of Patanjali Yoga Sutra describes the means and methods of controlling the mind to develop it further to attain enlightenment. In the first chapter, Sadhana Pada talks about the state of mind one tries to achieve in Raja yoga. The second chapter discusses the techniques, more popularly known as “*Ashtanga Yoga*,” the eight-limbed yoga. It describes *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* as techniques for refining the soul. The third chapter talks about the effects of the practices. The final chapter, also named *kaivalya pada*, explains the state of “*kaivalya*” or solitude, that one can attain through yoga. Patanjali defines this state of solitude as the supreme liberation that ensues upon destroying the seeds of all faults (*dosha bija kshaye*) and the detachment from attaining omniscience and omnipotence. III.50.PYS (Bryant, 2009). The Bhagavad Gita delineates the four streams of yoga- Raja yoga (yoga of will), Karma yoga (yoga of action), Jnana yoga (yoga of knowledge), and Bhakti yoga (yoga of emotion culture) as the different paths an individual can follow to reach the goal of yoga. All these streams of yoga are different methods to culture the mind and refine the individual to attain the state of liberation. All these revolve around the notion of mindfulness.

IX. Stoicism

In conclusion, it can be said that though both systems of philosophy, namely yoga, and stoicism, have originated in very different places and across many years, there is a marked similarity in the tenets of both philosophies. The basic principles of stoicism can be seen reflected in many authoritative texts of yoga philosophy. Both philosophies have strived to teach humankind the right way of living. Both have been instrumental in bringing about the betterment of humankind in all aspects. Stoicism is the philosophical basis of Cognitive Behavioral therapy, which has helped millions of people worldwide. Yoga is gaining popularity as one of the most effective modalities for inculcating mindfulness and as therapy.

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