

= Stoicism =

Stoicism is a school of Hellenistic philosophy founded in Athens by Zeno of Citium in the early 3rd century BC . The Stoics taught that destructive emotions resulted from errors in judgment , of the active relationship between cosmic determinism and human freedom , and the belief that it is virtuous to maintain a will (called prohairesis) that is in accord with nature . Because of this , the Stoics presented their philosophy as a way of life (lex divina) , and they thought that the best indication of an individual 's philosophy was not what a person said but how that person behaved . To live a good life , one had to understand the rules of the natural order since they taught that everything was rooted in nature .

Later Stoics ? such as Seneca and Epictetus ? emphasized that , because " virtue is sufficient for happiness " , a sage was immune to misfortune . This belief is similar to the meaning of the phrase " stoic calm " , though the phrase does not include the " radical ethical " Stoic views that only a sage can be considered truly free , and that all moral corruptions are equally vicious .

From its founding , Stoic doctrine was popular with a following in Roman Greece and throughout the Roman Empire ? including the Emperor Marcus Aurelius ? until the closing of all pagan philosophy schools in AD 529 by order of the Emperor Justinian I , who perceived them as being at odds with Christian faith . Neostoicism was a syncretic philosophical movement , joining Stoicism and Christianity , influenced by Justus Lipsius .

= = Basic tenets = =

The Stoics provided a unified account of the world , consisting of formal logic , monistic physics and naturalistic ethics . Of these , they emphasized ethics as the main focus of human knowledge , though their logical theories were of more interest for later philosophers .

Stoicism teaches the development of self @-@ control and fortitude as a means of overcoming destructive emotions ; the philosophy holds that becoming a clear and unbiased thinker allows one to understand the universal reason (logos) . A primary aspect of Stoicism involves improving the individual 's ethical and moral well @-@ being : " Virtue consists in a will that is in agreement with Nature . " This principle also applies to the realm of interpersonal relationships ; " to be free from anger , envy , and jealousy , " and to accept even slaves as " equals of other men , because all men alike are products of nature . "

The Stoic ethic espouses a deterministic perspective ; in regard to those who lack Stoic virtue , Cleanthes once opined that the wicked man is " like a dog tied to a cart , and compelled to go wherever it goes . " A Stoic of virtue , by contrast , would amend his will to suit the world and remain , in the words of Epictetus , " sick and yet happy , in peril and yet happy , dying and yet happy , in exile and happy , in disgrace and happy , " thus positing a " completely autonomous " individual will , and at the same time a universe that is " a rigidly deterministic single whole " . This viewpoint was later described as " Classical Pantheism " (and was adopted by Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza) .

Stoicism became the foremost popular philosophy among the educated elite in the Hellenistic world and the Roman Empire , to the point where , in the words of Gilbert Murray " nearly all the successors of Alexander [...] professed themselves Stoics . "

= = History = =

Beginning at around 301 BC , Zeno taught philosophy at the Stoa Poikile (i.e. , " the painted porch ") , from which his philosophy got its name . Unlike the other schools of philosophy , such as the Epicureans , Zeno chose to teach his philosophy in a public space , which was a colonnade overlooking the central gathering place of Athens , the Agora .

Zeno 's ideas developed from those of the Cynics , whose founding father , Antisthenes , had been a disciple of Socrates . Zeno 's most influential follower was Chrysippus , who was responsible for the molding of what is now called Stoicism . Later Roman Stoics focused on promoting a life in

harmony within the universe , over which one has no direct control .

Scholars usually divide the history of Stoicism into three phases :

Early Stoa , from the founding of the school by Zeno to Antipater .

Middle Stoa , including Panaetius and Posidonius .

Late Stoa , including Musonius Rufus , Seneca , Epictetus , and Marcus Aurelius .

No complete work by any Stoic philosopher survives from the first two phases of Stoicism . Only Roman texts from the Late Stoa survive .

= = Logic = =

= = = Propositional logic = = =

Diodorus Cronus , who was one of Zeno 's teachers , is considered the philosopher who first introduced and developed an approach to logic now known as propositional logic . This is an approach to logic based on statements or propositions , rather than terms , making it very different from Aristotle 's term logic . Later , Chrysippus developed a system that became known as Stoic logic and included a deductive system , Stoic Syllogistic , which was considered a rival to Aristotle 's Syllogistic (see Syllogism) . New interest in Stoic logic came in the 20th century , when important developments in logic were based on propositional logic . Susanne Bobzien wrote , " The many close similarities between Chrysippus ' philosophical logic and that of Gottlob Frege are especially striking . "

Bobzien also notes that " Chrysippus wrote over 300 books on logic , on virtually any topic logic today concerns itself with , including speech act theory , sentence analysis , singular and plural expressions , types of predicates , indexicals , existential propositions , sentential connectives , negations , disjunctions , conditionals , logical consequence , valid argument forms , theory of deduction , propositional logic , modal logic , tense logic , epistemic logic , logic of suppositions , logic of imperatives , ambiguity and logical paradoxes . "

= = = Categories = = =

The Stoics held that all being (?????) ? though not all things (?????) ? is corporeal . They accepted the distinction between concrete bodies and abstract ones , but rejected Aristotle 's belief that purely incorporeal being exists . Thus , they accepted Anaxagoras ' idea (as did Aristotle) that if an object is hot , it is because some part of a universal heat body had entered the object . But , unlike Aristotle , they extended the idea to cover all accidents . Thus if an object is red , it would be because some part of a universal red body had entered the object .

They held that there were four categories .

substance (???????????)

The primary matter , formless substance , (ousia) that things are made of

quality (?????)

The way matter is organized to form an individual object ; in Stoic physics , a physical ingredient (pneuma : air or breath) , which informs the matter

somehow disposed (??? ?????)

Particular characteristics , not present within the object , such as size , shape , action , and posture

Somehow disposed in relation to something (????? ?? ??? ?????)

Characteristics related to other phenomena , such as the position of an object within time and space relative to other objects

= = = Epistemology = = =

The Stoics propounded that knowledge can be attained through the use of reason . Truth can be distinguished from fallacy ? even if , in practice , only an approximation can be made . According to

the Stoics , the senses constantly receive sensations : pulsations that pass from objects through the senses to the mind , where they leave an impression in the imagination (phantasia) (an impression arising from the mind was called a phantasma) .

The mind has the ability to judge (????????????? , synkatathesis) ? approve or reject ? an impression , enabling it to distinguish a true representation of reality from one that is false . Some impressions can be assented to immediately , but others can only achieve varying degrees of hesitant approval , which can be labeled belief or opinion (doxa) . It is only through reason that we achieve clear comprehension and conviction (katalepsis) . Certain and true knowledge (episteme) , achievable by the Stoic sage , can be attained only by verifying the conviction with the expertise of one 's peers and the collective judgment of humankind .

= = Physics and cosmology = =

According to the Stoics , the universe is a material , reasoning substance , known as God or Nature , which the Stoics divided into two classes , the active and the passive . The passive substance is matter , which " lies sluggish , a substance ready for any use , but sure to remain unemployed if no one sets it in motion . " The active substance , which can be called Fate , or Universal Reason (Logos) , is an intelligent aether or primordial fire , which acts on the passive matter :

The universe itself is god and the universal outpouring of its soul ; it is this same world 's guiding principle , operating in mind and reason , together with the common nature of things and the totality that embraces all existence ; then the foreordained might and necessity of the future ; then fire and the principle of aether ; then those elements whose natural state is one of flux and transition , such as water , earth , and air ; then the sun , the moon , the stars ; and the universal existence in which all things are contained .

Everything is subject to the laws of Fate , for the Universe acts according to its own nature , and the nature of the passive matter it governs . The souls of people and animals are emanations from this primordial fire , and are , likewise , subject to Fate :

Constantly regard the universe as one living being , having one substance and one soul ; and observe how all things have reference to one perception , the perception of this one living being ; and how all things act with one movement ; and how all things are the cooperating causes of all things that exist ; observe too the continuous spinning of the thread and the structure of the web .

Individual souls are perishable by nature , and can be " transmuted and diffused , assuming a fiery nature by being received into the Seminal Reason (logos spermatikos) of the Universe . " Since right Reason is the foundation of both humanity and the universe , it follows that the goal of life is to live according to Reason , that is , to live a life according to Nature .

= = Ethics and virtues = =

The ancient Stoics are often misunderstood because the terms they used pertained to different concepts in the past than they do today . The word " stoic " has come to mean " unemotional " or indifferent to pain , because Stoic ethics taught freedom from " passion " by following " reason " . The Stoics did not seek to extinguish emotions ; rather , they sought to transform them by a resolute " ask?sis " that enables a person to develop clear judgment and inner calm . Logic , reflection , and concentration were the methods of such self @-@ discipline .

Borrowing from the Cynics , the foundation of Stoic ethics is that good lies in the state of the soul itself ; in wisdom and self @-@ control . Stoic ethics stressed the rule : " Follow where reason leads . " One must therefore strive to be free of the passions , bearing in mind that the ancient meaning of " passion " was " anguish " or " suffering " , that is , " passively " reacting to external events , which is somewhat different from the modern use of the word . A distinction was made between pathos (plural pathe) which is normally translated as passion , propathos or instinctive reaction (e.g. , turning pale and trembling when confronted by physical danger) and eupathos , which is the mark of the Stoic sage (sophos) . The eupatheia are feelings that result from correct judgment in the same way as passions result from incorrect judgment .

The idea was to be free of suffering through *apatheia* (Greek : ???????) or peace of mind (literally , " without passion ") , where peace of mind was understood in the ancient sense ? being objective or having " clear judgment " and the maintenance of equanimity in the face of life 's highs and lows .

For the Stoics , reason meant not only using logic , but also understanding the processes of nature ? the *logos* , or universal reason , inherent in all things . Living according to reason and virtue , they held , is to live in harmony with the divine order of the universe , in recognition of the common reason and essential value of all people .

The four cardinal virtues of the Stoic philosophy is a classification derived from the teachings of Plato :

wisdom (*Sophia*)

courage (*Andreia*)

justice (*Dikaiosyne*)

temperance (*Sophrosyne*) .

Following Socrates , the Stoics held that unhappiness and evil are the results of human ignorance of the reason in nature . If someone is unkind , it is because they are unaware of their own universal reason , which leads to the conclusion of kindness . The solution to evil and unhappiness then , is the practice of Stoic philosophy : to examine one 's own judgments and behavior and determine where they diverge from the universal reason of nature .

The Stoics accepted that suicide was permissible for the wise person in circumstances that might prevent them from living a virtuous life . Plutarch held that accepting life under tyranny would have compromised Cato 's self @-@ consistency (*constantia*) as a Stoic and impaired his freedom to make the honorable moral choices . Suicide could be justified if one fell victim to severe pain or disease , but otherwise suicide would usually be seen as a rejection of one 's social duty .

= = = The doctrine of " things indifferent " = = =

In philosophical terms , things that are indifferent are outside the application of moral law , that is without tendency to either promote or obstruct moral ends . Actions neither required nor forbidden by the moral law , or that do not affect morality , are called morally indifferent . The doctrine of things indifferent (????????? , *adiaphora*) arose in the Stoic school as a corollary of its diametric opposition of virtue and vice (????????? *kathekon* and ????????? *hamartemata* , respectively " convenient actions , " or actions in accordance with nature , and mistakes) . As a result of this dichotomy , a large class of objects were left unassigned and thus regarded as indifferent .

Eventually three sub @-@ classes of " things indifferent " developed : things to prefer because they assist life according to nature ; things to avoid because they hinder it ; and things indifferent in the narrower sense . The principle of *adiaphora* was also common to the Cynics and Sceptics . The doctrine of things indifferent was revived during the Renaissance by Philipp Melanchthon .

= = = Spiritual exercise = = =

Philosophy for a Stoic is not just a set of beliefs or ethical claims , it is a way of life involving constant practice and training (or *askesis* , see asceticism) . Stoic philosophical and spiritual practices included logic , Socratic dialogue and self @-@ dialogue , contemplation of death , training attention to remain in the present moment (similar to some forms of Eastern meditation) , and daily reflection on everyday problems and possible solutions . Philosophy for a Stoic is an active process of constant practice and self @-@ reminder .

In his *Meditations* , Marcus Aurelius defines several such practices . For example , in Book II.I :

Say to yourself in the early morning : I shall meet today ungrateful , violent , treacherous , envious , uncharitable men . All of the ignorance of real good and ill ... I can neither be harmed by any of them , for no man will involve me in wrong , nor can I be angry with my kinsman or hate him ; for we have come into the world to work together ...

Prior to Aurelius , Epictetus in his *Discourses* , distinguished between three types of act : judgment ,

desire , and inclination . According to French philosopher Pierre Hadot , Epictetus identifies these three acts with logic , physics , and ethics respectively . Hadot writes that in the Meditations , " Each maxim develops either one of these very characteristic topoi [i.e. , acts] , or two of them or three of them . "

The practices of spiritual exercises have been described as influencing those of reflective practice by Seamus Mac Suibhne . Parallels between Stoic spiritual exercises and modern cognitive @-@ behavioral therapy have been detailed at length in Robertson 's The Philosophy of Cognitive @-@ Behavioral Therapy .

= = Social philosophy = =

A distinctive feature of Stoicism is its cosmopolitanism : All people are manifestations of the one universal spirit and should , according to the Stoics , live in brotherly love and readily help one another . In the Discourses , Epictetus comments on man 's relationship with the world : " Each human being is primarily a citizen of his own commonwealth ; but he is also a member of the great city of gods and men , whereof the city political is only a copy . " This sentiment echoes that of Diogenes of Sinope , who said " I am not an Athenian or a Corinthian , but a citizen of the world . "

They held that external differences such as rank and wealth are of no importance in social relationships . Instead they advocated the brotherhood of humanity and the natural equality of all human beings . Stoicism became the most influential school of the Greco @-@ Roman world , and produced a number of remarkable writers and personalities , such as Cato the Younger and Epictetus .

In particular , they were noted for their urging of clemency toward slaves . Seneca exhorted , " Kindly remember that he whom you call your slave sprang from the same stock , is smiled upon by the same skies , and on equal terms with yourself breathes , lives , and dies . "

= = Christianity = =

The major difference between the two philosophies (social and spiritual) is Stoicism 's pantheism , in which God is never fully transcendent but always immanent . God as the world @-@ creating entity is personalized in Christian thought , but Stoicism equates God with the totality of the universe , which was deeply contrary to Christianity . The only incarnation in Stoicism is that each person has part of the logos within . Stoicism , unlike Christianity , does not posit a beginning or end to the universe .

Stoicism was later regarded by the Fathers of the Church as a " pagan philosophy " ; nonetheless , some of the central philosophical concepts of Stoicism were employed by the early Christian writers . Examples include the terms " logos " , " virtue " , " Spirit " , and " conscience " . But the parallels go well beyond the sharing and borrowing of terminology . Both Stoicism and Christianity assert an inner freedom in the face of the external world , a belief in human kinship with Nature or God , a sense of the innate depravity ? or " persistent evil " ? of humankind , and the futility and temporariness of worldly possessions and attachments . Both encourage Ascesis with respect to the passions and inferior emotions such as lust , and envy , so that the higher possibilities of one 's humanity can be awakened and developed .

Stoic writings such as the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius have been highly regarded by many Christians throughout the centuries . The Stoic ideal of dispassion is accepted to this day as the perfect moral state by the Eastern Orthodox Church . Saint Ambrose of Milan was known for applying Stoic philosophy to his theology .

= = = Influences = = =

The apostle Paul met with Stoics during his stay in Athens , reported in Acts 17 : 16 @-@ 18 . In his letters , Paul reflected heavily from his knowledge of Stoic philosophy , using Stoic terms and metaphors to assist his new Gentile converts in their understanding of the revealed word of God .

Stoic influence can also be seen in the works of St. Ambrose , Marcus Minucius Felix , and Tertullian .

Admiral James Stockdale , who was shot down over North Vietnam , held as a prisoner and repeatedly tortured was deeply influenced by Epictetus after being introduced to his works while at Stanford University . As he parachuted down from his plane , he reportedly said to himself " I 'm leaving the world of technology and entering the world of Epictetus ! "

= = Modern usage = =

The word " stoic " commonly refers to someone indifferent to pain , pleasure , grief , or joy . The modern usage as " person who represses feelings or endures patiently " was first cited in 1579 as a noun , and 1596 as an adjective . In contrast to the term " Epicurean " , the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 's entry on Stoicism notes , " the sense of the English adjective ' stoical ' is not utterly misleading with regard to its philosophical origins . "

= = Philosophers = =

Zeno of Citium (332 ? 262 BC) , founder of Stoicism and the Stoic Academy (Stoa) in Athens

Aristo of Chios (fl . 260 BC) , pupil of Zeno ;

Herillus of Carthage (fl . 3rd century BC)

Cleanthes (of Assos) (330 ? 232 BC) , second head of Stoic Academy

Chrysippus (280 ? 204 BC) , third head of the academy

Diogenes of Babylon (230 ? 150 BC)

Antipater of Tarsus (210 ? 129 BC)

Panaetius of Rhodes (185 ? 109 BC)

Posidonius of Apameia (c . 135 BC ? 51 BC)

Diodotus (c . 120 BC ? 59 BC) , teacher of Cicero

Cato the Younger (94 ? 46 BC)

Seneca (4 BC ? AD 65)

Gaius Musonius Rufus (1st century AD)

Rubellius Plautus (AD 33 ? 62)

Publius Clodius Thrax Paetus (1st century AD)

Lucius Annaeus Cornutus (1st century AD)

Epictetus (AD 55 ? 135)

Hierocles (2nd century AD)

Marcus Aurelius (AD 121 ? 180)

= = = Studies = = =

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