



**CV notes:**

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*‘Meditations’*

**By**

**MARCUS AURELIUS**

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## ***Introduction:***

Recently I studied the book 'MEDITATIONS' by Marcus Aurelius and was so much impressed with the book that I proceeded to compile my notes from the book into my own little presentation. Any errors and deviations that may have resulted from modifications and rearrangement into passages are my responsibility and not that of the original writer, Marcus Aurelius. I must admit that rearrangement into passages helped me to easily understand the original work.

Marcus Aurelius (121 to 180 AD), one of the most respected emperors in Roman history, ruled the Roman empire from 161 to 180 AD. He recorded his Stoic philosophic thoughts and beliefs in a collection of twelve books. The work is very much in the format of quotations. The contents in these books were primarily addressed to the emperor himself, 'things to oneself' (self-address). The word 'meditation' implies 'to eis heauton= to himself', private notes to oneself; as a source of self-guidance, self-improvement, self-examination, and self-judgement. Stubborn endurance, repression of emotions and living in conformity with nature and cosmos are emphasized throughout the twelve books.

Stoic virtues follow along the following three elements:

1. *Physics*-Universe and its laws
2. *Logic*- Reason, the force and essence of life, that trains the mind to discern true from false  
(the art of reason= philosophy)
3. *Ethics*- application of knowledge to practical life

The stoics believed in the goodness of things, no matter how bad things were at any given time; whereas Epicureans sought as much pleasure as they could in the here and now, and promoted freedom from restrictions and disturbances, and allowed unbridled license for pleasure and comfort. Stoicism gives a stop gap, a barrier, against irrational emotions. It teaches us to take a pause and to look at emotions rationally and use reason, virtuous thinking and right action to get on the right path. Stoics elaborated a taxonomy of virtue; dividing virtue into four elements- wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation(temperance). These four elements later came to be recognized as the four cardinal virtues.

Instead of arranging my notes sectionally to correspond with the 'twelve books' of the original work, I have chosen to present them in one continuous essay in the format of quotations and passages.

Marcus Aurelius begins his Book-one, with the offerings of gratitude and indebtedness to his parents and to various principal and instrumental personalities, including ancestors, kinsmen, teachers, significant advisors, for enabling him to acquire the following virtuous attributes in his upbringing and growth.

\*

Good morals

Mildness and government of temper

Modesty

Character improvement

Discipline

Piety

Beneficence

Abstinence from evil deeds and from evil thoughts

Simplicity in one's way of living

Education- invest liberally on schools, education and teachers

'Be neither of the green nor of the blue party', not to be too partisan

Endurance of labor

To want little

Not to meddle with other's affairs

Not to be ready to listen to slander

Not to busy oneself about trifling things

Endure freedom of speech

Become intimate with philosophy

Not to do benevolent things in order to make a display

Read carefully and be not satisfied with a superficial understanding of a book or subject

Not to give hostility assent to those who talk over much

Freedom of will

Undeviating steadiness of purpose

Look to nothing else, not even for a moment, except to reason

Accept and become an example that the same man can be both most resolute and yielding

Benevolent disposition

Live conformably to nature

Possess gravity without affectation

Look carefully after the interest of friends

Tolerate ignorant persons and those who form opinions without consideration

Cultivate the power to accommodate yourself to all

Restrain anger and much passion without noisy display

The faculty both of discerning and ordering one's life in an intelligent and methodical way

Express approbation without noisy display

Possess much knowledge without ostentation

Observe and avoid envy, duplicity, hypocrisy; such qualities seen in a tyrant

To foresee things a long way off

Cheerfulness in all circumstances, as well as in illness

Cherish good hopes

Consistency and undeviating steadiness in your regard for philosophy

A disposition to do good

To give to others readily

A just admixture in the moral character of sweetness and dignity

Be frank, open minded, not concealing opinions

Do what is set before you without complaining

Be ready to forgive

Be free from falsehood

Unchangeable resolution in the things once you determine after due deliberation

Love of labor

Perseverance and persistence

Never stop investigating through until satisfied with appearances which first present themselves

Careful inquiry in all matters of deliberation

Readiness to listen to those who have anything to propose for the common weal (public good)

Shun vain glory in those things which men call honors

Patiently endure the blame

Sobriety in all things

Be agreeable in conversation without any offensive affectation

Attend to care of body's health

Undeviating firmness in giving to every man according to his deserts

Conviction in the faith that the course of the world runs is a good one

The soul of man is an emanation from godhead, into whom it will eventually be reabsorbed

The divine ruling principle makes all things work together for good; for the good of the Whole

Unity of the universe dictates everything, and everything is part of a great Whole.

Put an end once for all to this discussion of what a good man should be; instead be one.

Public spirit is the most splendid public virtue, and all people are members of a worldwide brotherhood

Set and seek: Good examples, Good advice, Good counsel

Trust in the grand scheme of things, and know that Logos has a plan for everyone

To look for the fig in winter is a madman's act

.....

The end of rational animals is to follow the reason and the law.

(Law, very much in the sense of "*Dharma*" / righteous living as in the Hindu/Indian teachings)

\*

Be easily disposed to be pacified and reconciled as soon as those who have offended and angered thee have shown readiness to be reconciled.

\*

Refrain from fault finding of others; instead work with them by offering expressions and suggestions which ought to have been used.

\*

Consider your skill in expounding philosophical principles and experiences as the smallest of your merits.  
[‘do not boast of your prowess’]

\*

Not frequently, nor without necessity, say to anyone or write that I have no leisure, nor continually excuse the neglect of duties, by alleging urgent occupations.

\*

Learn how to receive from friends what are esteemed favors without either being humbled by them or letting them go unnoticed.

\*

Not to be indifferent when a friend finds fault without reason, but try to restore him to his usual disposition.

\*

Possess the idea of a polity in which there is the same law for all; a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech and the idea of which respects most of all the freedom of the governed.

\*

Firmness in the things which conduce to the commodity of life, of which fortune gives an abundant supply; use without arrogance and without excusing yourself.

\*

Be ready to give way without envy to those who possess any particular faculty, so that each might enjoy reputation according to one's ability and gifts.

\*

Be able to abstain from, and to enjoy,  
those things which many are too weak to abstain from and  
cannot enjoy without excess. [Enjoy without excess]

\*

Remember the principles necessary for life: the faculty of discovering and of ordering one's life, in an intelligent and methodical way.

\*

Consider yourself equal to every man.

\*

Check immediately popular applause and all flattery.

\*

Learn to endure blames patiently which you are likely to get in the conduct of your duty and governance.

\*

Let so be said of thee:

‘He was a man who looked to what ought to be done; not to the reputation which is got by a man’s acts’.

\*

Be strong to bear the weakness and deficiency,

be sober in the excess;

this is the mark of a person who has a perfect and invincible soul.

\*

The universe is God,

popular gods its manifestation, and the

legends and myths are allegorical.

\*

The highest good of man is to consciously work with God for the common good, and

to live in accord with nature;

it is virtue alone which enables an individual to do this;

Virtue in the soul must rule the man.

\*

The highest good is the virtuous life,

virtue alone is happiness,

vice is unhappiness,

nothing is good but virtue.

\*

Practice the ideal of self-control, and get stronger and better every day than your previous self.

\*

You have power over your mind;

Realize this, and you will find strength.

\*

In withstanding of passions standeth the very peace of heart;  
let's set the axe to the root,  
that we being purged of our passions may have a peaceful mind;  
to this end, there must be continued self-examination.

\*

Continually gather thyself together,  
with purpose and manner;  
in word, in work and in thought.

\*

The innermost thoughts of your heart,  
set down to ease them,  
with such moral maxims and reflections  
as may help you to beat the burden of duty and the annoyances of busy life.

\*

To serve the divine spirit which is implanted within,  
a man must keep himself pure from violent passions and evil affection,  
from all rashness and vanity,  
from all manner of discontent; and  
unspotted by pleasure, undaunted by pain,  
with unwavering courtesy and consideration as his aims;  
whatsoever any man doth or saith, one must be good.

\*

The offender needs pity not wrath,  
those who must be corrected should be treated with tact and gentleness;  
the best kind of revenge is not to become like unto them,  
the evil must be overcome with good.

\*



For each fault in others,  
Nature has given us a counteracting virtue.

\*

Whensoever thou wilt rejoice thyself,  
think and meditate upon these good parts and special gifts,  
which thou hast observed in any of them that live with thee, as industry in one, modesty in another or  
simplicity in another, in another bountifulness, or reasonableness, in another some other good thing;  
for nothing can so much rejoice thee as the resemblances and parallels of packets of virtues, eminent in  
the dispositions of them that live with thee;  
especially when all at once, as it were, they represent themselves unto thee,  
See therefore, that thou hast them always in readiness.

\*

Pathways to happiness

1. Ethical outlook- loving one's life as an ongoing journey of self-improvement, self-discipline, modesty, self-control, temperance, personal development
2. Recurrent preoccupation with human transience
3. Acceptance of the reality that in nature, everything doesn't always make a sense, but everything happens for a reason
4. Life is too short to complain
5. The realization that only pain you suffer is the one you create yourself
6. Learn to live in conformity with nature, Cosmos and God
7. Being good, doing good, doing social good

Such a virtuous life leads to happiness.

\*

What it means to try to live one's life sincerely and urgently?  
over and above the biological or physical existence, and  
external or internal dimensions of our existence,  
we should aim to shape our lives,  
as the expression of an ongoing journey towards an ideal state of character,  
which should constitute our target even though we will never achieve it fully

\*

Begin the morning by saying to thyself, I shall meet with the busy-body, the ungrateful, arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial. All this is likely to occur in the course of your daily activities;

Accept that these things happen to such people (the ungrateful, arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial) by reason of their ignorance of what is good and evil;

But be convinced, I have seen the nature of the good that is beautiful and of the bad that is ugly; but I will not be injured by them nor vexed with what is ugly.

\*

Through not observing what is in the mind of another, a man has seldom been seen to be unhappy; but those who do not observe the movements of their own minds of necessity must be unhappy.

\*

The soul of man does violence to itself:

When it becomes a tumor (pain, inflammation, burden) on the universe,

When it turns away from any man or moves towards those who are angry, with the intention of injuring them,

When the soul is overpowered by pleasure or pain,

When it allows any act or movement to be without an aim and

When it does anything thoughtlessly, without considering what is right.

\*

Observe constantly that all things take place by change, and

accustom thyself to consider that the nature of the Universe loves nothing so much the things which are and to make new things like them,

for everything that exists is in a manner the seed of that which will be,

keep thyself simple, good, pure, serious, free from affectation, and

a friend of justice and truth, kind, affectionate, strenuous in all proper acts,

and reverence the gods.

\*

To recover thy life is in thy power;

look at things again as thou didst use to look at them;

for in this consists the recovery of thy life.

.....

\*

All things are implicated with one another, and the bond is holy, and  
there is hardly anything unconnected with any other thing;  
for things have been coordinated, and they combine to form the same universe (order).  
for there is one universe made up of all things, and  
one God who pervades all things, and one substance, and  
one law, one common reason in all intelligent animals and  
one truth and indeed one perfection for all animals which are of the same stock.

\*

Observe then what it wills, and let nothing else distract thee;  
for thou hast had experience of many wanderings without having found happiness anywhere,  
not in syllogisms, nor in wealth, nor in reputation, nor in enjoyment, nor anywhere;  
where is then?  
If he has principles from which come his affects and his acts.  
what principles?  
those which relate to good and bad;  
the belief that there is nothing good for man, which does not make him just, temperate, courageous,  
free.

[syllogism= deductive reasoning, of formal argument consisting of two premises and a conclusion]

\*

The things, pollutants and impurities, that can prevent thy mind from remaining pure, wise, sober and  
just,  
In order to disperse such pollutants,  
possess a perpetual fountain, not a mere well, of contentment, simplicity and modesty,  
continually to wash out impurities.

\*

He who does wrong, does wrong against himself;  
He who acts unjustly, acts unjustly to himself, because he makes himself bad.

\*

.....

Both man and (God)universe produce fruit; at the proper seasons.

\*

If thou art able, correct by teaching those who do wrong; but  
if thou canst not, remember that indulgence is given to thee for this purpose,  
It is in thy power also, just as the gods help persons;  
so, who hinders thee?

\*

As thou thyself art a component part of a social system,  
So, let every act of thine be a component part of social life.

\*

Whatever act of thine has no reference either immediately or remotely to a social end,  
this tears asunder thy life, and does not allow it to be one, and  
it is of the nature of a mutiny just as when in a popular assembly  
a man acting by himself stands apart from the general agreement.

\*

When another blames thee or hates thee, or  
when men say about thee anything injurious,  
approach their poor souls, penetrate within, and see what kind of men they are;  
however, thou must be well disposed towards them, for by nature, they are friends.

\*

I am a part of the whole which is governed by nature,  
I am in a manner intimately related to the parts which are of the same kind with myself,  
for remembering this, in as much as I am a part,  
I shall be disconnected with none of the things which are assigned to me out of the whole,  
for nothing is injurious to the part, if it is for the advantage of the whole,  
for the whole contains nothing which is not for its advantage;  
the universe has this principle that it cannot be compelled even by any external cause to generate  
anything harmful to itself,  
remembering this then, that I am a part of such a whole, I shall be content with everything that  
happens, I shall do nothing unsocial,  
but I shall rather direct myself to the things which are of the same kind as myself, and I shall turn my  
efforts to the common interest, and divert them from the contrary,  
now, if these things are done so, life must flow happily.

\*

Acquire the contemplative way of seeing how all things change into one another and constantly attend  
to it;  
He who follows reason in all things is both tranquil and active at the same time; cheerful and collected  
as well.

\*

To Nature who gives and takes back all,  
the man who is instructed and modest says:  
“give what thou wilt; take back thou what thou wilt”

\*

Constantly contemplate the whole of time, and the whole of substance; and  
consider that all individual things-  
as to substance are a grain of a fig, and  
as to the time, the thing of a gimlet’.

(gimlet= a very small hand tool for drilling small holes)

\*

.....

That is for the good of each thing, which the universal nature brings to each;  
and it is for its good at the time when nature brings it.

\*

Let this always be plain to thee,  
that this piece of land is like any other;  
and that all things here are the same with things –  
on top of a mountain or on the sea shore, or  
dwelling within the walls of a city or  
as in a shepherd's fold on a mountain ---Plato

\*

The healthy eye ought to see all visible things,  
and ought not to say, "I wish (only) for green things",  
for this (saying so) is a condition of a diseased eye;  
just the same, the healthy hearing and smelling -  
ought to be ready to perceive all that can be heard and smelled,  
and the healthy stomach ought to be (able to accept) with respect to all food,  
just as the mill respect to all things which it is formed to grind;  
Just so, healthy understanding agent (ought) to be prepared for everything which happens;  
but that which says, 'let all men praise whatever I may do', demanding it to be only its own way,  
Is (like) an eye which seeks for only green things, or teeth which seek for only soft thing.

\*

These are the properties of the rational soul:  
it sees itself, analyzes itself, makes itself as it chooses,  
the fruit which it bears itself enjoys,  
it obtains its own end, wherever the limit of life may be fixed,  
it traverses the whole universe, and beyond, the surrounding vacuum,  
it extends itself into the infinity of time,  
comprehends the periodical renovation of all things,  
and embraces the uniformity that prevails all things which have been and all that will be.

\*

In contemplating thyself, never include the vessel which surrounds thee.

\*

Those who try to stand in the way when thou art proceeding according to right reason,  
they will not be able to turn thee aside from thy proper action,  
neither let them drive thee from thy benevolent feelings towards them,  
but be on thy guard, not only in the matters of steady judgement and action, but also in the matter of  
gentleness towards those who try to hinder or otherwise trouble thee,  
for this also is a weakness, to be vexed at them, as well as to be diverted from thy course of action and  
to give way through fear; for both are equally deserters from their posts.

\*

The spherical form of the soul maintains its figure,  
it is neither extended towards any object, nor contracted inwards,  
nor dispersed nor sinks down, but  
it is illumined by light, by which it sees truth, the truth of all things and the truth that is in itself.

\*

Suppose any man shall despise me, let him look to that himself,  
but I will look to this that I be not discovered doing or saying anything deserving of contempt,  
shall any man hate me, I will be mild and benevolent towards everyman, and  
ready to show even him his mistakes; not reproachfully, but nobly and honestly.

\*

If the things do not come to thee, the pursuits and avoidances of which disturb thee,  
still in a manner thou goest to them,  
let then thy judgement about them be at rest, and  
they will remain quiet, and thou will not be seen either pursuing or avoiding.

\*

Men despise one another, and flatter one another;  
men wish to raise themselves above one another, and crouch before one another.

\*

.....

The good and the simple and the benevolent show all these things in the eyes,  
no need for them to announce or to give notice,  
it will show itself by acts and show itself in the eyes,  
there is no mistaking.

\*

As to living in the best way, this power is in the soul;  
it is the things we ourselves produce the judgements about them,  
and we write them in ourselves, it being in our power not to write them, and  
if perchance these judgements have imperceptibly got admission to our minds, to wipe them out,  
if those things are according to nature, rejoice in them,  
but if contrary to nature, seek what is conformable to thy own nature and strive towards this;  
for everyman is allowed to seek his own good.

\*

Consider whence each thing is come, and  
what it consists and into what it changes;  
what kind of a thing it will be when it has changed, and  
that it will sustain no harm.

\*

Thou must avoid flattering men and being vexed by them, for both are unsocial and lead to harm.

\*

To be moved by passion is not manly,  
but the mildness and gentleness, are more agreeable to human nature, so also, they are more manly;  
he who possesses these qualities possesses strength, nerves and courage and  
not the man who is subject to fits of passion and discontent,  
for in the same degree in which a man's mind is nearer to freedom from all passion in the same degree  
also is it nearer to strength; and  
the sense of pain is a characteristic of weakness, so also is anger,  
for he who yields to pain and who he yields to anger, both are wounded and both submit.

\*

.....



If any have offended thee, consider these:

- What is my relation to men, and that we are made for one another, for the sake of one another;
- Consider what kind of men are around you, under what compulsions in respect of opinions they are and as to their acts, consider with what pride they do what they do;
- If men do rightly what they do, we ought not to be displeased, but if they do not do right, it is plain that they do so involuntarily and in ignorance. For every soul is unwillingly deprived of the truth, so also it is unwillingly deprived of the power of behaving to each man according to his deserts. Accordingly, men are pained when they are called unjust, ungrateful and greedy and in a word, wrong doers to their neighbors;
- consider thou also dost many things wrong, and thou art a man like others and even thou dost abstain from certain faults, still thou hast the disposition to commit them, through either cowardice about reputation or some such mean motive, thou dost abstain from such faults;
- consider that thou dost not even understand whether men are doing wrong or not, for many things are done with a certain reference to circumstances, in short, a man must learn a great deal to enable him to pass a correct judgement on another man's acts;
- consider thou art much vexed or grieved, that man's life is short lived;
- consider that it is not man's acts which disturb us, for those acts have their foundation in man's ruling principles, but it is our own opinions which disturb us. Take away these opinions then, and resolve to dismiss thy judgement about an act and thy anger is gone. Reflect that no wrongful act of another brings shame on thee, for unless that which is shameful is alone bad;
- consider how much more pain is brought on us by the anger and vexation, consider by such acts than by the acts themselves, at which we are angry and vexed;
- consider that good disposition is invincible, if it be genuine.

For what will the most violent man do to thee, if thou continues to be a kind disposition towards him, and if, as opportunity offers, thou gently admonishes him and calmly correct his errors at the very time when he is trying to do thee harm; saying- 'Not so my child- we are constituted by nature for something else; I shall certainly not be injured, but thou art injuring thyself, my child'; and show him with gentle tact and by general principles that this is so; and thou must do this neither with double meaning nor in the way of reproach, but affectionately and without rancor in thy soul, and not as if thou wert lecturing him, nor yet that any bystander may admire, but either when he is alone and if others were present

Consider- receive the tenth present with this last rule- from the Muses (Apollo): To expect bad men not to do wrong is madness, though it is not an impossibility; but to allow men to behave so to others, and to expect them not to do thee any wrong, is irrational and tyrannical.

Remember these rules; and begin at last to be a man while thou livest.

\*

.....

Set seats in the shade for strangers; sit down yourselves anywhere.

\*

I would not receive a favor and then be unable to return it. Socrates

\*

Constantly think of someone of the men of former times who practiced virtue.

\*

Look to the heavens that we may be reminded of those bodies,  
which continually do the heavenly things and perform their work,  
be reminded of their purity and openness,  
for there is no veil over a star.

\*

Neither in writing nor in reading,  
wilt thou be able to lay down rules for others,  
before thou shalt have learned to obey rules thyself.

\*

The unripe grapes, the ripe bunch, and the dried grapes;  
All are changes,  
Not into nothing, but  
Into something which exists not yet.

\*

No man can rob us of our free will.

\*

What do you want?  
Souls of rational men or irrational?  
Of what rational men?  
Sound or unsound? Sound—  
Why then do you not seek them?  
Because, we have them-  
Why then do you fight and quarrel?

\*

All those things at which thou wishest to arrive by a circuitous road, thou canst have now;  
if thou wilt take no notice of all the past and trust the future to providence and direct the present only conformably to piety;  
that thou mayest be content with the lot which is assigned to thee by nature;  
for nature designed it for thee and thee for it.

\*

Conformably to justice,  
that thou mayest always speak the truth freely and without disguise, and  
do the things which are agreeable to law and according to the worth of each; and  
let neither another man's wickedness hinder thee, nor opinion nor voice;  
if thou shalt fear never to have begun to live according to nature-  
then thou wilt be a man worthy of the universe which has produced thee.

\*

Thou shalt strive to live only what is really thy life,  
that is the present,  
then thou wilt be able to pass that portion of life which remains for thee,  
free from perturbation, nobly and obedient, to thy own daemon (to the divine spirit that is within thee)

\*

I have often wondered how it is that every man loves himself more than all the rest of men,  
but yet sets less value on his own opinion of himself than on the opinion of others.

\*

Practice thyself even in the things thou despirest of accomplishing,  
for even the left hand, which is inefficient for all other things for want of practice,  
holds the bridle more vigorously than the right hand;  
for it has been practiced in this.

\*

.....

These three principles thou must have in readiness:

In the things which thou dost do nothing either considerably or otherwise than as justice herself would act;

with respect to what may happen to thee from without, consider that it happens either by chance or according to Providence, and thou must neither blame chance nor accuse Providence;

consider what every being is from the seed to the time of its receiving a soul, and from the reception of a soul to the going back to the same, and of what things every being is compounded and into what things it is resolved.

\*

Nature of the good is beautiful, and of the bad that it is ugly.

\*

We are made for cooperation; like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of teeth etc;  
to act against one another then is contrary to nature.

\*

.....

Do not be dissatisfied with thy present lot, nor shrink from the future.

\*

From thence all things flow; and  
there is besides necessity,  
that which is for the advantage of the whole universe,  
of which thou art a part

.....

Thou must now at least perceive of that universe, that thou art a part of and  
of what administrator of the universe thy existence is an efflux,  
that a limit of time is fixed for thee,  
which if thou dost not use for clearing away the clouds from thy mind,  
if it will go, it will never return.

.....

Every moment,  
think steadily to do what thou hast in hand,  
with perfect and simple dignity, and  
with feeling of affection, freedom and justice.

.....  
By doing wrong to thyself, thou wilt no longer have the opportunity of honoring thyself

\*

This thou must always bear in mind,  
what is the nature of the whole and of thy nature,  
how this is related to that,  
what kind of a part it is of what kind of a whole; and  
that there is no one who hinders thee from always doing and saying the things which are according to  
the nature of which thou art a part

.....  
The offences which are committed through desire are more blameable than those which are committed  
through anger;

for he who is excited by anger seems to turn away from reason with a certain pain and unconscious  
contraction;

but he who offends through desire, being overpowered by pleasure, seems to be in a mood  
intemperate;

one is more like a person who has been first wronged and through pain, is compelled to be angry; but  
the other is moved by his own impulse to do wrong being carried towards doing something by desire

.....  
Gods have put all the means in man's power,  
power to enable him not to fall into real evils;  
so, regulate every act and thought accordingly  
.....

Through not observing what is in the mind of another,  
a man has seldom been seen to be unhappy,  
but those who do not observe the movements of their own minds,  
must of necessity be unhappy.

.....

Nothing is more wretched than a man who traverses everything in a round, and  
pries into the things beneath the earth and seeks by conjecture what is in the minds of his neighbors,  
without perceiving that it sufficient to attend to the daemon within him and to reverence it sincerely,  
keeping it pure from passion, thoughtlessness and dissatisfaction.

.....

Do not waste thy life in thoughts about others,  
when thou dost not refer thy thoughts to some objects of common utility;  
for thou lovest the opportunity of doing something else,  
when hast such thoughts as these, what is such a person doing, why, and what is he saying, what is he  
thinking of, and is he contriving and whatever else of the kind;  
makes us wander away from the observation of our ruling power;  
we ought then to check in the series of our thoughts everything that it is without a purpose and useless,  
but most of all the overcurious feeling and the malignant; and  
a man should use himself to think of those things only;  
simple, benevolent; and such as befits a social animal.

\*

Be a member among the best:  
uncontaminated by pleasure, unharmed by pain, untouched by insults, feeling no wrong, a fighter in the  
noblest fight,  
one who cannot be overpowered by any passion,  
dyed deep with justice,  
accepting with all his soul everything that happens and  
accepting what is assigned to him as his portion.

\*

It is only what belongs to oneself that he makes the matter for his activity, and  
he constantly thinks of that which is allotted to himself out of the sum total of things and  
he makes his own acts fair and  
he is persuaded that his own portion is good;  
for the lot which is assigned to each man is carried along with him and carries him along with it;  
and he remembers that every rational is his kinsman and  
that to care for all men is according to man's nature.

\*

If thou findest in human life anything better than justice, truth, temperance, fortitude,  
in a word, anything better than thy own mind's self-satisfaction, in the things which it enables thee to do  
according to right reasons,  
if thou seest anything better than this,  
turn to it with all thy soul and enjoy that which thou hast found to be the best,  
simply and freely choose the better and hold to it,  
that which is useful is the better;  
if it is useful to thee as a rational being, keep to it; but  
if it is only useful to thee as an animal, maintain thy judgement without arrogance;  
only take care that thou markest the inquiry by a sure method.

\*

Engage in your duty,  
not unwillingly,  
nor without regard to the common interest,  
nor without due consideration,  
nor with distraction.

\*

Be not either a man of many words, or busy about many things.

\*

Let the deity (divine essence) which is within thee be the guardian of thy living.

\*

A man must stand erect, not be kept erect by others.

\*

Never value anything as profitable to thyself,  
which shall compel thee to break thy promise,  
to lose thy self-respect,  
to hate any man, to suspect, curse, or act the hypocrite,  
to desire anything which needs walls and curtains.

\*

Remember every man lives only this present time,  
which is an indivisible point and  
that all the rest of his life, is either past or it is uncertain,  
short then is the time which everyman lives, and small is the nook of the earth where he lives.

\*

Nothing is productive of the elevation of the mind as to be able to examine methodically and truly,  
every object which is presented to thee in life, and  
always to look at things so as to see at same time what kind of universe this is and what kind of use  
everything performs in it, and  
what value everything has with reference to the whole.

\*

If thou workest at that which is before thee,  
following right reason seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything else to distract thee,  
keeping thyself pure;  
if thou holdest to this, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but  
satisfied with thy present activity according to nature; and  
with heroic truth, in every word and sound, which thou utterest,  
thou wilt live happy, there is no man who is able to prevent this.

\*



As physicians have always their instruments and knives,  
ready for cases of illness which suddenly require their skill,  
so, thou hast principles ready for the understanding and remedy of things, and  
for doing everything with a recollection of the bond which unites the divine and human to one another.

\*

Let no act be done without a purpose.

\*

Retire into thyself;

It is in thy power whenever thou shalt choose to retire into thyself;  
no need to seek retreats, houses in the country, on seashores or in mountains;  
for now and here, either for more quiet or more freedom from trouble,  
retire then into thy own soul, and immediately dive into perfect tranquility,  
that tranquility is nothing else than the good ordering of the mind;  
constantly then give to thyself this retreat, and renew thyself.

\*

As soon as soon as you recur to thy principles,  
they will be sufficient to cleanse thy soul, and send thee back free from all discontent;  
remember to retire into this little territory of thy own;  
do not distract or strain thyself, but be free.

\*

A man should always have these two principles in readiness:

The one- to do only whatever the reason of the ruling faculty may suggest for the use/ benefit of men;

The other- to change thy opinion if there is anyone at hand who sets thee right and moves thee from thy opinion;

but this change of opinion must proceed only from a certain persuasion as of what is just or of common advantage, and the like; not because it appears pleasant or brings reputation.

\*

Hast thou reason? Why then dost thou use it?

For if this does its own work, what else thou dost wish?

\*

Thou hast existed as a part,  
thou shalt disappear in that which produced thee,  
thou shalt be received back into its seminal principle of transmutation

\*

Everything which is in anyway is beautiful in itself,  
not dependent on having praise of itself,  
neither worse nor better is a thing made by being praised;  
such a thing as gold, emerald, or ivory made worse than it was, if it was not praised?

\*

Remember that the attention given to anything has its proper value and proportion;  
further, thou shalt not be dissatisfied if thou applies thyself to smaller matters no further than is fit.

\*

Thoughts that are just,  
acts that are social,  
words which never lie,  
disposition which gladly accepts all that happens, as necessary.

\*

Our perturbances come only from the opinion which is within.

The universe is transformation;  
things that change are external.

\*

Within days thou wilt seem as good to,  
those to whom thou art now a beast and an ape;  
if thou wilt return to thy principles  
and to the worship of reason.

\*

Do not act as if thou wert going to live thousand years;  
So, while thou livest, while still it is in thy power, be good.

\*

Look not round at the depraved morals of others, but  
you run straight along the line without deviating from it.

\*

In every movement, have respect to justice and  
on the occasions of every impression, maintain the faculty of understanding.

\*

Everything harmonizes with me, which is harmonious to thee, O Universe,  
Nothing for me is too early or too late, which is in due time for thee, Universe/Nature,  
Everything is fruit to me, which thy seasons bring, O Nature;  
From thee are all things,  
In thee are all things,  
To thee all things return

\*

Occupy thyself with few things, says the philosopher;  
If thou wouldst be tranquil.

\*

If a man takes away what others say and do being unnecessary,  
he will have more leisure and less uneasiness;  
on every occasion, a man should ask himself, is this one of the necessary things?  
Now a man should take away not only unnecessary acts, but also unnecessary thoughts,  
so, thus superfluous thoughts will not follow with acts after.

\*

Try how the life of a good man suits thee,  
the life of him who is satisfied with his portion out of the whole, and  
satisfied with his own just acts and benevolent disposition.

\*

Thy life is short, and thou must turn to profit from the present,  
by the aid of reason and justice.

\*

Love the art, poor as it may be, which thou hast learned, and  
be content with it.

\*

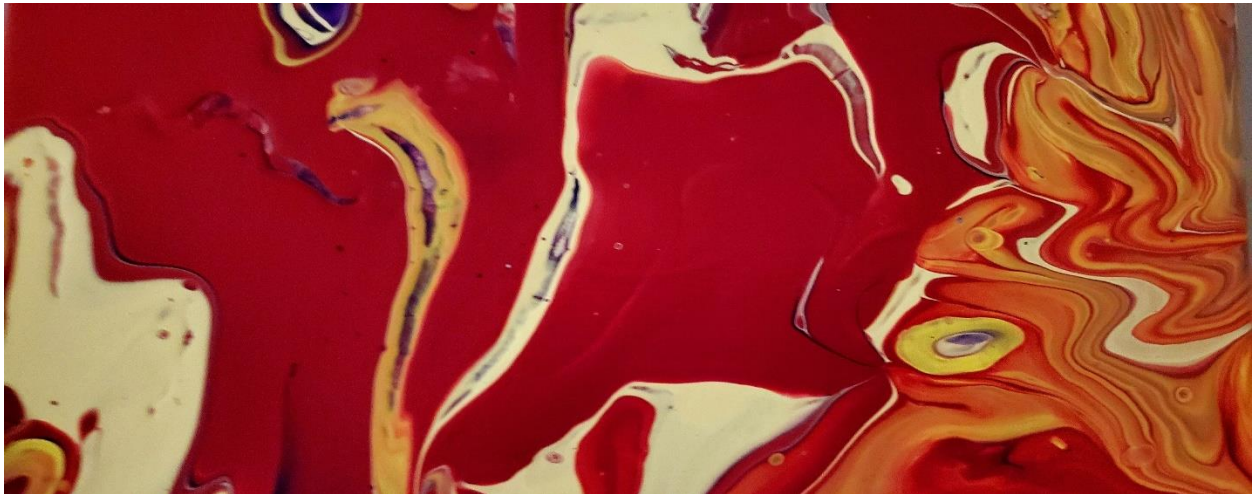
Examine ruling principles of those worthy of following;  
what kind of things they avoid and the kind of things they pursue.

\*

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

[contexture=interwoven, woven or linked together]

\*



**'Contexture'**

*PJB artwork*

\*\*

Heraclitus said:

Always remember that the death of the earth is to become water, and  
the death of water is to become air, and  
the death of air is to become fire and reversely.  
(cycle of change, transmutation)

\*

Pass through this little space of time,  
conformably to nature, and  
end thy journey in content,  
just as an olive falls off when it is ripe;  
blessing the nature which produced it, and  
thanking the tree on which it grew.

\*

On every occasion, which leads thee to vexation;  
apply this principle: not that it is a misfortune, but that to bear it nobly is a good fortune.

\*

I am going to do the things for which I exist and  
for which I was brought into this world.

\*

One man when he has done a service to another, is ready to set it down to his account as a favor conferred;  
another one is not ready to do so, but still in his own mind, he thinks of the man as his debtor, and he knows what he has done;  
a third one, in a manner does not even know what he has done,  
such a man is like a vine which has produced grapes, and  
seeks for nothing more after it has once produced its proper fruit.

\*

How easy it is to repel and to wipe away,  
every impression which is troublesome or unsuitable, and  
immediately find yourself to be in all tranquility.

\*

As a horse when he has run his course,  
a dog when he has tracked the game,  
a bee when it has made the honey,  
so, a man when he has done a good act, does not call out for others to come and see;  
but he goes on to another act,  
as a vine goes onto produce again the grapes in season.

\*

Be not disgusted, nor discouraged, nor dissatisfied,  
if thou dost not succeed in doing everything according to right principles;  
but when thou hast failed,  
return back again.

\*

To what am I now employing my own soul?  
on every occasion, I must ask myself this question, and inquire,  
what have I now in this part of me which they call the ruling principle?  
which kind of soul have I now? That of a child, a young man, or of a tyrant or an animal?

\*

I am comprised of the formal(causal) and the material;  
neither of them will perish into non-existence,  
as neither of them came out of non-existence;  
every part of me then will be reduced by change into some part of the universe and  
that again will change into another part of the universe, and so on forever.

\*

Such as are thy habitual thoughts,  
such also will be the character of thy mind,  
for the soul is dyed by the thoughts.

\*

Reverence that which is best in the universe, and  
that which makes use of all things and directs all things;  
in like manner:  
reverence that which is best in thyself,  
this is of same kind as that;  
that which makes use of everything else, and thy life is directed by it.

\*

Think of the universal substance,  
of which thou hast a very small portion;  
of universal time, of which a short interval has been assigned to thee;  
both fixed by destiny and how small a part of it thou art.

\*

Let the part of thy soul which leads and governs be undisturbed by the movements in the flesh,  
whether of pleasure or of pain;  
let thy soul not unite with them, but  
let it circumscribe itself and limit those affects to their parts.

\*

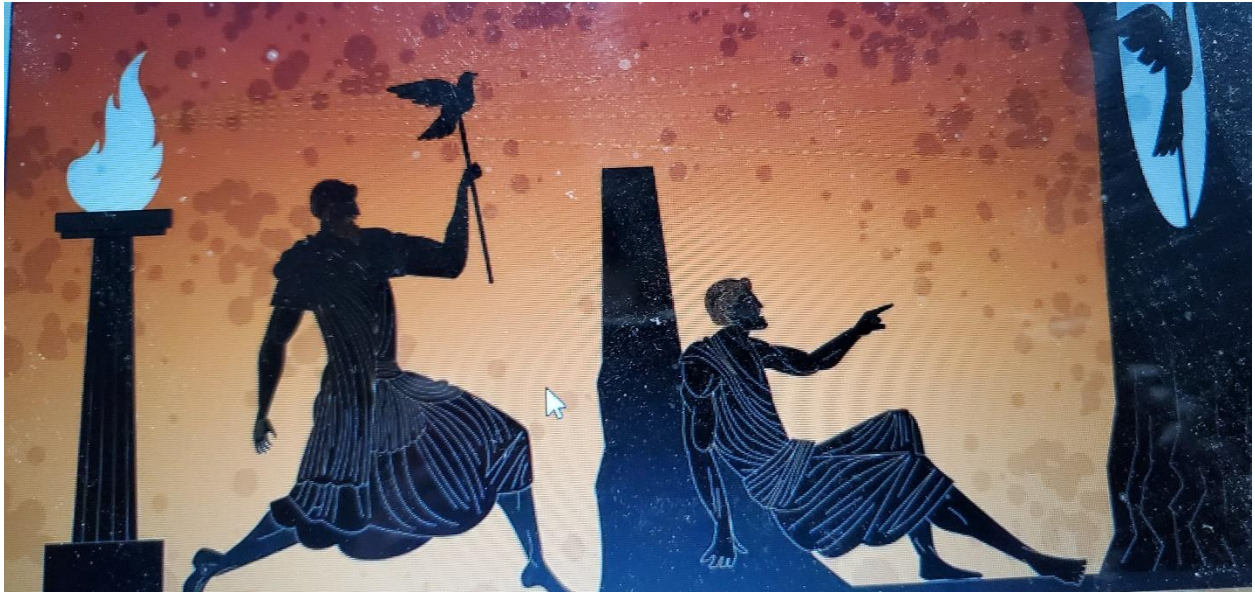
Behave to all in such a way that this may be said of thee:  
'Never has wronged a man in deed or word'

\*

Thou canst pass thy life in an equable flow of happiness,  
if thou canst go by the right way, think and act in the right way,  
holding good consists in the disposition to justice and the practice of it,  
in this, let thy desire find its termination.

\*

Examine all things severally, without haste, without confusion, in an orderly way, vigorously and Consistently. [Do not be carried along by the appearance of things]



*Look for the real, not swept away by shadows and impressions - 'CAVE' by Plato*

\*

Give help to all, according to  
thy ability and  
their fitness.

\*

Assign yourself a good fortune:  
a good fortune is: good disposition of the soul, good emotions, good actions.

\*

The substance of the universe is obedient and compliant, to  
the Reason which governs it and perfects it,  
it has in itself no cause for doing evil,  
for it has no malice, nor anything harmed by it.



\*

Look within thee,  
let neither the peculiar quality of anything nor its value escape thee.

\*

All existing things soon change, and  
they will be reduced to vapor or they will be disposed.

\*

Take pleasure in one thing and rest on it;  
in passing from one good social act to another.

\*

When thou hast been compelled by circumstances to be disturbed in a manner,  
quickly return to thyself,  
do not continue to be out of tune longer than the compulsion lasts,  
for thou wilt have more mastery over the harmony by continually recurring to thy soul

\*

Life is the field of duty and responsibility,  
philosophy is the place of rest, repose, of inquiry, healing, and retreat;  
through philosophy, what thou meetest in the arena of duty and responsibility,  
it would appear to thee tolerable, and thou appearest tolerable to others.

\*

All through life:  
All things, possessions and impressions that you experience,  
penetrate them, see what kind of things they are,  
where there are things which appear most worthy of your approbation,  
you ought to lay them bare and look at their worth or worthlessness, and  
strip them of all the words by which they are exalted,  
for outward show is a wonderful perverter of reason and  
when thou art employed by such things, it is then that it cheats the most.

\*

The best way of avenging thyself is not to become like the wrongdoer.

\*

If any man is able to show and convince me, that I do not think or act right,  
I will gladly change;  
for I seek the truth by which no man was ever injured,  
but he is injured who abides in his error and ignorance.

\*

I do my duty and other things trouble me not;  
for they are either without life or things without reason, or have rambled and know not the way;  
it is thy duty to observe and without being disturbed or showing anger,  
go on thy way and finish that which is set before thee

\*

Of this short life, there is only one fruit in here,  
of a pious disposition and social acts.

\*

Constancy in every act which is conformable to reason and evenness in all things;  
piety, serenity in countenance, sweetness, and disregard of empty fame.

\*

Never let anything pass through without first most carefully examine it.

\*

Bear with those who blame you unjustly, without blaming them in return.

\*

Be an exact examiner of manners and actions;  
not given to reproach people, nor timid, nor suspicious,  
satisfied with little,  
laborious and patient,  
tolerate freedom of speech in those who oppose your opinions and  
have pleasure when any man shows you anything better

\*

Listen not calumnies.

\*

Be religious without superstitions

\*

Call thyself back, and return to thy sober senses

\*

Neither the labour which the hand does, nor that of the foot, is contrary to nature;  
so long as the foot does the foot's work and the hand does that of the hand, as designed.

\*

Adapt thyself to the things with which thy lot has been cast.

\*

Does the sun undertake to do the work of the rain?

Aesculapius (medical man) the work of the Fruit bearer (earth)?

each of the stars, are they not different and yet they work together to the same end?

we are all working together to the one end.

\*

All the sea like a drop in the universe,

all the present time is a mere point in eternity.

\*

*Under one Umbrella-- by PjB*



\*

*Frequently consider the connection of all things,  
in the universe and their relation to one another;  
in a manner all things are implicated with one another,  
and to unity of substance.*

\*



*Art work by PJB*

\*

*There is one light of the Sun, though it is distributed over walls, mountains and other things,  
there is one common substance though it is distributed among countless bodies,  
there is one soul though it is distributed among infinite natures, and individuals,  
there is one intelligent soul, though it seems to be divided.*

\*

Pass thy life in truth and justice, with a benevolent disposition, if thou wishest to delight thyself;  
think of the virtues and morals exhibited in abundance by those who live with thee;  
for nothing delineates so much as the examples of the virtues,  
wherefore we must keep them ready before us.

\*

Be satisfied with the amount of substance which has been assigned to thee,  
so also, be content with the time allotted.

\*

He who loves his own fame all the time,  
claims another man's activity to be his own good;  
he who loves pleasure, considers his own sensations;  
but he who has understanding, considers his own acts be his own good.

\*

It is in our power to have no opinion about a thing, and not to be disturbed in our soul,  
for things themselves have no natural power to form our judgements.

\*

That which is not good for the swarm, neither it is good for the bee.

\*

If sailors abused the helmsman or the sick abused the doctor,  
would they listen to anybody else?  
how could the helmsman secure the safety of those in the ship?  
or the doctor the health of those whom he attends?

\*

Together with how many, I came into the world,  
already are gone out of it;  
how soon will time cover all things, and  
how many it has covered already

\*

Everyman is worth just so much as the things are worth about which he busies himself

\*

I am a part of the whole which is governed by nature;  
In a manner intimately related to the parts which are of same kind with myself

\*

The rational soul:  
It sees itself,  
analyzes itself,  
makes itself such as it chooses,  
the fruit which it bears itself enjoys,  
it obtains its own end, wherever the limit of life may be fixed

\*

There is one universe made up of all things, and  
one God who pervades all things,  
one Substance and one law,  
one common reason for all intelligent animals and  
one truth.

[law= Dharma= righteous living]

\*

Everything material soon disappears in the substance of the whole, and  
everything formal (causal) soon taken back into the universal Reason.

\*

Rational beings though exist separate, but they have been constituted for one cooperation,  
the perception of this will be more apparent for thee,  
if thou often sayest to thyself that I am a member (melos) of the system of rational beings;  
but if thou merely sayest that you are a part (meros) of the system of rational beings,  
thou dost not yet mean from thy heart that beneficence does not delight thee for its own sake;  
thou still dost it barely as a thing of property, not yet as doing good to thyself.

\*

Whatever any one dost or saith,  
I must be good, and keep my purity just as gold;  
whatever anyone does or saith,  
I must be emerald and keep my color.

\*

Near thy forgetfulness of all things, and  
near the forgetfulness of thee by all.

\*

Nature which governs the whole  
will soon change things which thou seest,  
out of their substance will make other things and again other things,  
in order that the world may be ever new.

\*

Think not so much of what thou hast not as of what thou hast,  
of the things thou hast, select the best and  
then reflect how eagerly they would have been sought,  
if thou hadst them not.

\*

Retire into thyself. The rational principle which rules has this nature that it is content with itself then it  
does what is best and so secures tranquility.

\*

Remember that law (Dharma) rules all.

\*

Whether death is dispersion, or resolution,  
into atoms, annihilation, extinction or change;  
the heaps of sand piled on one another hide the former sands,  
so, in life the events which go before soon covered by those which come after.

\*



Look within,  
within is the fountain of good, and  
it will ever bubble up,  
if thou wilt ever dig.

\*

The art of life is like the wrestler's art,  
it shall stand ready and firm,  
to meet onslaughts which are sudden and unexpected.

\*

Very little indeed is necessary for living a happy life.

\*

It is in thy power to live free from all compulsions, in the greatest tranquility of mind.

\*

There is nothing good for man,  
which dost not make him just, temperate, courageous, and free.

\*

How many things you have to take care of,  
to how many things are you slaves?

\*

Nothing should be done without a purpose

\*

Everything exists for some end

\*

Receive wealth or prosperity without arrogance; and be ready to let it go

\*

It is thy duty to order thy life well, in every single act

\*

In the constitution of the rational animal,  
I see no virtue which is opposed to justice;  
but I see a virtue which is opposed to excessive love of pleasure, and  
that is temperance.

\*

He who acts unjustly, acts impiously.

\*

Since the universal nature has made rational animals,  
for the sake of one another, to help one another,  
but in no way to injure one another,  
he who transgresses her will, is guilty of impiety towards the highest divinity

\*

Have I done any act something for the general interest?  
What is thy act? To be good...never stop doing good.

\*

In justice, all other virtues have their fountain.

\*

*Light*



A body will deprive itself of illumination, if it does not admit it  
Does the light of lamp shine without losing its splendor until it is extinguished?  
Let the truth which is in thee and justice and temperance shine all through your life.

\*

If it is not right, do not do it;  
if it is not true, do not say it.

\*

Always observe what the thing is which produces for thee an appearance,  
and resolve it by dividing it into:  
Formal (causal),  
Material,  
its purpose and  
time within which it must end.

\*

Do nothing inconsiderably,  
nor without a purpose.

\*

Make thy acts refer nothing else than to a social end.

\*

Consider that everything is an opinion, and opinion is in thy power,  
take away then thy opinion;  
thou wilt find calm, and everything stable, a waveless bay;  
cast away opinion, thou art saved; who then hinders thee from casting it away?

\*

You have the power:  
to strip away superfluous troubles located wholly in your judgement,  
to possess a large room for yourself embracing in thought of the whole cosmos,  
to consider everlasting time,  
to think of the rapid change in the parts of each thing, and  
of how short it is from birth until dissolution and  
the infinite void before birth and that after dissolution

\*

How small a part of the boundless and unfathomable time is assigned to every man,  
how small a part of the whole substance,  
how small a part of the universal soul,  
on what a small clod of the whole earth thou creepest...  
[clod=a lump of earth or clay]

\*

## ***Epilogue***

As if a praetor, who has employed an actor, and dismisses him from stage;  
“But I have not finished the five acts, but only finished three of them”, thou (actor) sayest;  
but in thy life, three acts are the whole drama, for what shall be a complete drama;  
as determined by praetor who was the cause of its composition, and now of its dissolution;  
but thou art the cause of neither;  
depart then satisfied, for he also who releases thee is satisfied.  
*(praetor=a judicial officer in ancient Rome in charge of productions and games, with authority in matters of equity)*

\*

Everything material soon disappears in the substance of the whole, and  
everything formal (causal) is very soon taken back into the universal Reason.  
Whether death is dispersion, or resolution,  
into atoms, or annihilation; extinction or change;  
the heaps of sand piled on one another hide the former sands,  
so, in life, the events which go before are soon covered by those which come after.

\*

Thou hast embarked,  
Thou hast made the voyage,  
Thou art come to shore,  
Thou hast flourished well,  
Time now to disembark, with joy and contentment

\*

'I offer my indebtedness to gods:

For having good parents, good family kinship, good ancestors, good siblings, good friends and nearly everything good;

I was not hurried into any offence against any of them,

though I had a disposition, if opportunity had offered, might have led to do something of that kind;

but, through their favor, there never was such a concurrence of circumstances as to put me to the trial'

\*



*Fall- finale*

*Art work by PJB*

## **Concluding note:**

I undertook this brief work as a diversion from the book I have been currently working on, by coincidence, which deals with the topics of goodness, virtues and happiness. In the course of research for my book, I came across the book 'Meditations' by Marcus Aurelius. I found the book fascinating because of its striking resemblance in its messages to the teachings of the Eastern philosophy, in particular that of the Indian Upanishads. In my earlier book, "Requi.OM by CV" published last year (Amazon digital books), which is currently under revision, I have incorporated liberally the Upanishadic teachings. With this background knowledge, I could immediately feel the vibrations of the Upanishadic messages in the 'Meditations'.

The overall information for this presentation comes from the original work of Marcus Aurelius, philosopher king. However, I have made significant changes in terms of arrangement of passages, moved around the contents from the original work and inserted words and phrases not in the original work, taking extreme care not to deviate from the original intent. The original work is not in the format that I have arranged it here, namely, like 'verses' of 4-6 lines. Largely, such arrangement made me understand the book better. I am sure many errors will surface to be fixed and plenty of suggestions from all you readers.

Thanks to everyone for considering to look through this work, which should not require too much of your time. Hopefully, you will save a few passages for self-examination and self-improvement, as intended by the philosopher king, Marcus Aurelius.

---CV

## **Acknowledgement:**

The principal source utilized in the preparation of my presentation:

MEDITATIONS by Marcus Aurelius, a Wisehouse Classics, digital publication; English translation by George Long; Sweden, ISBN 978-91-7637-085-8.

# *Meditations by Marcus Aurelius*

