

Colonel Mahendra Mathur

**PONDER OVER WORLD'S
ALL TIME NINETY-TWO
GREATEST THINKERS,
ANOUSHKA**



PUSTAK PRESS

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Ponder Over Word's All Time Ninety-two Greatest Thinkers,

Anoushka

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The difficulty is not so great to die
for a friend, as to find a friend
worth dying for.

Homer

1. HOMER (Ancient Greece - 8th Century BC)

The Homeric world picture was of a flat, disk-shaped earth, with the sky set over the top like an inverted metal bowl and Hades underneath the earth in a more or less symmetrical relation to the sky. The sun, moon, and stars were taken to move across the fixed heaven from east to west. The space between the earth and the sky contained *aer* (mist), and above that was *aether* (the bright air of the upper heavens). The earth was completely surrounded by the river of Ocean.

The historian Herodotus observed that Homer and Hesiod together had determined for all the Greeks what their gods were like. There is one general feature about the Homeric gods that is of much importance: They were not dark gods, accessible only to mystics and appeaseable by magic, but on the whole very human and rational. They had powers over the world of human experience, and their powers were defined and hierarchical.

The actions of the human characters in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are represented as being influenced or manipulated more or less constantly by the gods. Actions that might be otherwise difficult to explain, such as a sudden access of superhuman courage, are especially attributed to the intervention of a god.



"Be still my heart; thou hast known worse than this." Homer



Aristotle contemplating a bust of Homer

2. VYASA (Ancient India)

"While we enter into the path of the Spirit, humility is the great weapon we have, and we have no other weapon." - Vyasa

Nobody is born and nobody dies– only they shift their locations – and so Masters like Vyasa could summon anybody from anywhere, just as one can write a letter to a person in Kanyakumari and request him to be here, or one can go to New York and see someone there. There is no birth or death involved in this; it is only a change of position or location. So, no one is destroyed. Everybody is here and everything is just now, in one place or the other, in one form or the other; and all the heroes of ancient history are even today alive somewhere. They are not destroyed. Everything is everywhere in a most concrete form.

Such a realisation was a possession of this great Master Maharishi Vyasa who has given us the great message of the Mahabharata (story of Pandavas) and the Bhagavadgita.



**"It is Nature that causes all movement. Deluded by the ego,
the fool harbors the perception that says "I did it"."**
Vyasa



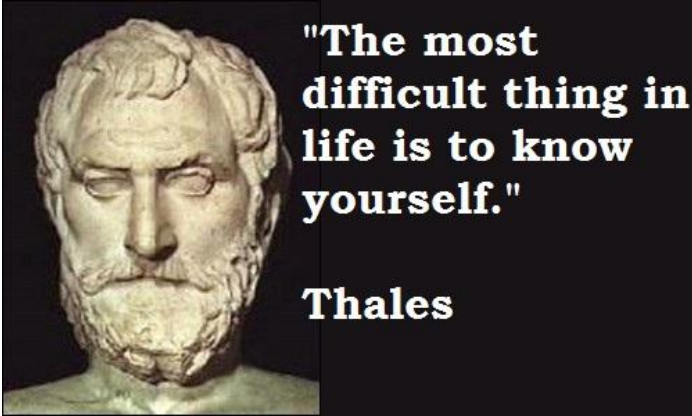
Pandavas meet Maharishi Vyasa

3. THALES OF MILETUS (624 - 543 BC)

The Greeks often invoked idiosyncratic explanations of natural phenomena by reference to the will of anthropomorphic gods and heroes. Thales, however, aimed to explain natural phenomena via a rational explanation that referenced natural processes themselves. For example, Thales attempted to explain earthquakes by hypothesizing that the Earth floats on water, and that earthquakes occur when the Earth is rocked by waves, rather than assuming that earthquakes were the result of supernatural processes. Although the theory is wrong, Thales's hypothesis is rational because it provides an explanation which does not invoke hidden entities.

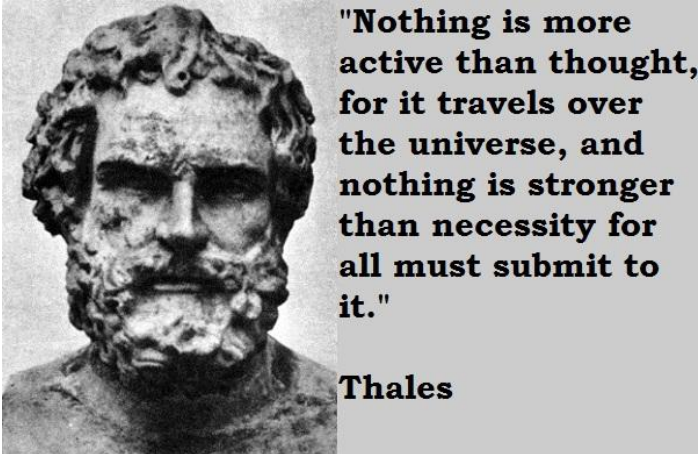
Thales, too, to judge from what is recorded of his views, seems to suppose that the soul is in a sense the cause of movement, since he says that a stone [magnet or lodestone] has a soul because it causes movement to iron. Some thought then that the soul pervades the whole universe, whence perhaps came Thales's view that everything is full of gods.

Thales' most famous belief was his cosmological thesis, which held that the world started from water.



"The most difficult thing in life is to know yourself."

Thales



"Nothing is more active than thought, for it travels over the universe, and nothing is stronger than necessity for all must submit to it."

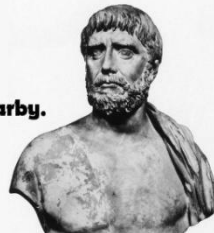
Thales

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What is quite common?

Hope. Because even to those who have nothing else, it is still nearby.

- Thales (624 BC – 546 BC)



4. VASHISHTA (Ancient India)

Vasishta was a great ascetic. He was the preceptor of great men like Sri Rama and Harischandra. He had conquered anger and desire. He was a great saint who humbled insolent men and became a guide to thousands of aspirants.

This is what Vashishta told Rama. Look here you are going to work to become king, and rule your subjects. You are going to administer and create law and order. You will have to do so many things, and there is no harm. But you must remember one thing; that everything is an idea. Gyana is an idea and karma is an idea; renunciation is an idea as well as desire and passion. Even spiritual experience is an idea. After all, the whole world is maya, the conglomeration of ideas.

Sage Vashishta closes his instructions to Rama by saying, 'Even if the world is unreal, participate, because even that participation is unreal. Even if everything that is happening is all stupidity, participate. Be stupid with the stupid, foolish with the fools. You can become an emperor, a general, a swami, an administrator, a housewife, a trader, a businessman, an artist, an engineer or even a prostitute. These are all an expression of your karma.' 'Oh Rama, even though you will rule a kingdom, it does not stand in the way of spiritual life.

Renunciation of objects and duties is not renunciation. It is renunciation of idea or identification that is important. One must fulfil obligations, the duties of nature. Then and only then, will they not come into direct confrontation.'



**"Wise men do not desire to do anything; wise men do not desire to abandon action either."
Vashishta**

5. LAO-TZU (604-531 BC)

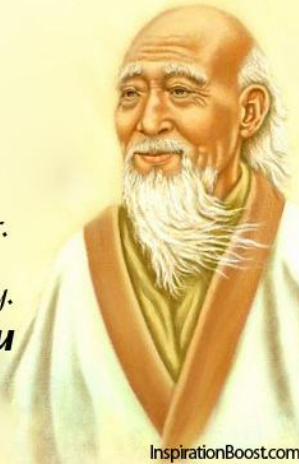
Nothing certain is known about Lao Tzu, whose name means 'the Ancient Master' and is a reverential title rather than a name. The *Tao Te Ching* is the sole accessible work of Lao Tzu.

The life of the Sage embodies the highest standard of action, and it represents a condition metaphorically characterized as *p'u*, the uncarved block, the raw material of myriad uses before it has been put to use. Once it is carved – into a bowl, a pillar, a grinding stone – it is useful, but its pristine nature is confined. So it is with human beings: to the extent they set about tasks for one or another purpose or in fulfilment of one or another desire, they cease to live in their original nature. The carved object which is worn out or broken ceases to have any use at all, whilst the uncarved block remains potentially useful. Hence the Sage seems to do nothing, being neither utilitarian nor empirical, and yet is the relevant factor in every condition and at every moment. In the sense appropriate to the Tao, only the Sage ever accomplishes anything of lasting value. He is the unperceived ruler of the world.

As the Tao is eternal, consciousness which becomes fully consonant with the Tao experiences immortality. It is no longer subject to the play of opposites because it has transcended them by understanding and assimilating their operation and integrating them into the ceaseless, soundless hum of the Tao.

*Watch your thoughts;
They become words.
Watch your words;
They become actions.
Watch your actions;
They become habits.
Watch your habits;
They become character.
Watch your character;
It becomes your destiny.*

Lao Tzu



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**“One cannot reflect in streaming water.
Only those who know internal peace
can give it to others.”**

~ Lao Tzu



6. MAHAVIRA (599-527 BC)

Mahavira is the name most commonly used to refer to the Indian sage Vardhamāna who established what are today considered to be the central tenets of Jainism. His philosophy has eight cardinal principals – three metaphysical and five ethical. The objective is to elevate the quality of life. In a state of karmic delusion, the individual seeks temporary and illusory pleasure in material possessions, which are the root causes of self-centered violent thoughts and deeds as well as anger, hatred, greed, and other vices. These result in further accumulation of karma.

To liberate one's self, Mahavira taught the necessity of right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct. At the heart of right conduct for Jains lie the five great vows:

Nonviolence – to cause no harm to any living being;

Truthfulness – to speak the harmless truth only;

Non-stealing – to take nothing not properly given;

Chastity – to indulge in no sensual pleasure;

Non-possession/Non-attachment – to detach completely from people, places, and material things.

Monks and nuns adhere strictly to these vows, while the laypeople observe them as best they can.

Mahavir Swami's teachings.....

Always speak the truth.

Control over oneself is very important.

There is no point accumulating loads of wealth
that you can't even spend.

Follow the path of non violence.

Be compassionate towards living beings.



LIVE AND LET LIVE

Let us Spread these words of

Lord Mahavir

and follow the path

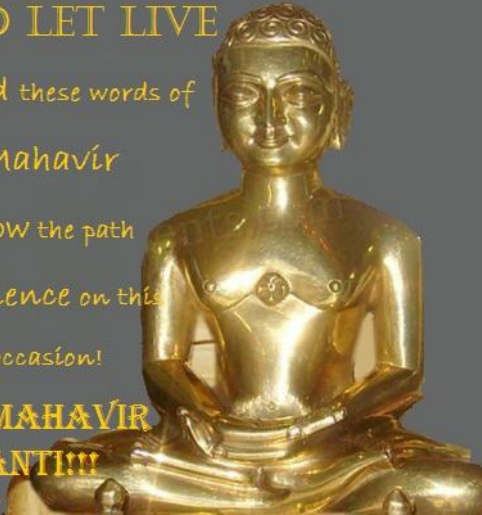
of non violence on this

Holy Occasion!

HAPPY MAHAVIR

JAYANTI!!!

www.healththoughts.in



7. PYTHAGORAS (570-495 BC)

Pythagoras spent his early years on the island of Samos, off the coast of modern Turkey. At the age of forty, however, he emigrated to the city of Croton in southern Italy and most of his philosophical activity occurred there. Pythagoras was famous (1) as an expert on the fate of the soul after death, who thought that the soul was immortal and went through a series of reincarnations; (2) as an expert on religious ritual; (3) as a wonder-worker who had a thigh of gold and who could be two places at the same time; (4) as the founder of a strict way of life that emphasized dietary restrictions, religious ritual and rigorous self discipline

Pythagoras presented a cosmos that was structured according to moral principles and significant numerical relationships. In such a cosmos, the planets were seen as instruments of divine vengeance, the sun and moon are the isles of the blessed where we may go, if we live a good life, while thunder functioned to frighten the souls. The heavenly bodies also appear to have moved in accordance with the mathematical ratios that govern the concordant musical intervals in order to produce music of the heavens, which later developed into "the harmony of the spheres."

Pythagoras succeeded in promulgating a new more optimistic view of the fate of the soul after death and in founding a way of life that was attractive for its rigor and discipline and that drew to him numerous devoted followers.



Rest satisfied with doing well, and leave others to talk of you as they please. - Pythagoras.

8. GAUTAM BUDDHA (India 563-483 BC)

Buddha gave out the experiences of his Samadhi: "I thus behold my mind released from the defilement of earthly existence, released from the defilement of sensual pleasures, released from the defilement of heresy, released from the defilement of ignorance."

In the emancipated state arose the knowledge: "I am emancipated, rebirth is extinct, the religious walk is accomplished, what had to be done is done, and there is no need for the present existence. I have overcome all foes; I am all-wise; I am free from stains in every way; I have left everything and have obtained emancipation by the destruction of desire. Myself having gained knowledge, whom should I call my Master? I have no teacher; no one is equal to me. I am the holy one in this world; I am the highest teacher. I alone am the absolute omniscient one. I have gained coolness by the extinction of all passion and have obtained Nirvana".

Lord Buddha preached: "We will have to find out the cause of sorrow and the way to escape from it. The desire for sensual enjoyment and clinging to earthly life is the cause of sorrow. If we can eradicate desire, all sorrows and pains will come to an end. We will enjoy Nirvana or eternal peace. Those who follow the Noble Eightfold Path strictly, viz., right opinion, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right employment, right exertion, right thought and right self-concentration will be free from sorrow.



In the sky, there is no distinction of east and west; people create distinctions out of their own minds and then believe them to be true. Buddha

9. CONFUCIUS (China 551-479 BC)

His moral teachings emphasized self-cultivation, emulation of moral exemplars, and the attainment of skilled judgment rather than knowledge of rules.

Virtuous action towards others begins with virtuous and sincere thought, which begins with knowledge. A virtuous disposition without knowledge is susceptible to corruption and virtuous action without sincerity is not true righteousness. Cultivating knowledge and sincerity is also important for one's own sake; the superior person loves learning for the sake of learning and righteousness for the sake of righteousness

The Confucian theory of ethics as exemplified in [Li](#) (禮) is based on three important conceptual aspects of life: ceremonies associated with sacrifice to ancestors and deities of various types, social and political institutions, and the etiquette of daily behavior.

In Confucianism, the concept of *li* is closely related to *yi* (義). *Yi* can be translated as righteousness, though it may simply mean what is ethically best to do in a certain context. The term contrasts with action done out of self-interest. While pursuing one's own self-interest is not necessarily bad, one would be a better, more righteous person if one's life was based upon following a path designed to enhance the greater good. Thus an outcome of *yi* is doing the right thing for the right reason.



"It is not the failure of others to appreciate your abilities that should trouble you, but rather your failure to appreciate theirs."

Confucius



Everything has its beauty, but not everyone sees it.

QuoteCartoon.com



"By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest."

Confucius

10. PARMENIDES OF ELIA (Born 545 BC)

Parmenides of Elia was an ancient Greek philosopher born in Elea, a Greek city on the southern coast of Italy. He was the founder of the Eleatic school of philosophy. The single known work of Parmenides is a poem, *On Nature*, which has survived only in fragmentary form. Parmenides was a young man when he wrote it, for the goddess who reveals the truth to him addresses him as "youth."

In this poem, Parmenides describes two views of reality. In "the way of truth", he explains how reality (coined as "what-is") is one, change is impossible, and existence is timeless, uniform, necessary, and unchanging. In "the way of opinion," he explains the world of appearances, in which one's sensory faculties lead to conceptions which are false and deceitful. These ideas strongly influenced the whole of Western philosophy, perhaps most notably through its effect on Plato.

His work thus has two divisions. The first discusses the truth, and the second the world of illusion — that is, the world of the senses and the erroneous opinions of mankind founded upon them. In his opinion truth lies in the perception that existence is, and error in the idea that non-existence also can be.



"We can speak and think only of what exists. And what exists is uncreated and imperishable for it is whole and unchanging and complete." Parmenides
The picture shows Parmenides with Heraclitus sitting.

11. HERACLITUS OF EPHEBUS

(Greece 535-475 BC)

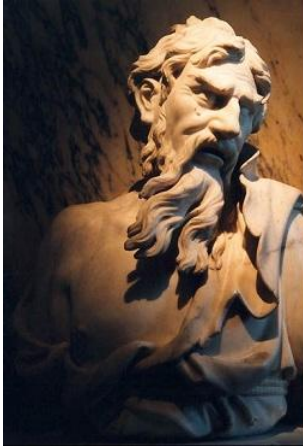
Heraclitus is famous for his insistence on ever-present change in the universe, as stated in the famous saying, "No man ever steps in the same river twice". He believed in the unity of opposites, stating that "the path up and down are one and the same", all existing entities being characterized by pairs of contrary properties.

His cryptic great utterance was "All entities come to be in accordance with this *Logos*" (literally, 'word', "reason", or "account"). "Even though all things occur according to the *Logos*, the rest of mankind are just as unconscious of what they do while awake as they are of what they do while they sleep", Heraclitus proclaimed. Three of his other quotes are:

"As a single, unified thing there exists in us both life and death, waking and sleeping, youth and old age, because the former things having changed are now the latter, and when those latter things change, they become the former."

"Good character is not formed in a week or a month. It is created little by little, day by day. Protracted and patient effort is needed to develop good character."

"Abundance of knowledge does not teach men to be wise."



"Eyes and ears are poor witnesses to people if they have uncultured souls."

Heraclitus



"God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, surfeit and hunger."

Heraclitus

"The soul is dyed the colour of its thoughts. Think only on those things that are in line with your principles and can bear the light of day. The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you do is who you become. Your integrity is your destiny - it is the light that guides your way." – Heraclitus

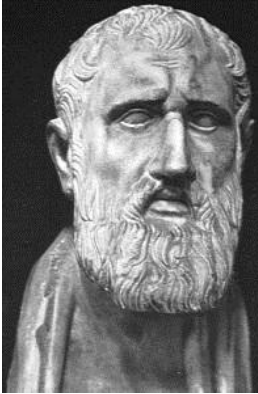
12. ZENO OF ELIA (490-430 BC)

Zeno was Parmenides' pupil. Zeno defended his teacher's position on the illusion of change. Like Parmenides, Zeno took the view that common sense led to absurd conclusions. Our senses fail to provide any evidence about reality but only about appearances. Therefore, what our senses reveal to us is deceiving.

- In Achilles and the Tortoise in order for the swift Achilles to overcome the tortoise, he must reach a point that the tortoise has already left. The distance between the two can be infinitely subdivided and so Achilles can never really overtake the tortoise. Motion cannot exist at all.
- The Paradox of the Arrow also illustrates that motion is impossible. An arrow shot at a target cannot reach its destination, for at every moment, the arrow has to occupy a specific position in space equal to its length. But this is the definition of an object at rest. So the arrow does not move.

In both of these examples, Zeno is showing that a pluralistic universe is impossible. Parmenides had shown that variety and change were illusions of the senses. In his paradoxes Zeno showed the same thing about motion. Parmenides was right.

Zeno looked at and tried to understand the world in a scientific, rational manner. He was convinced that the world was a systematic, orderly place.

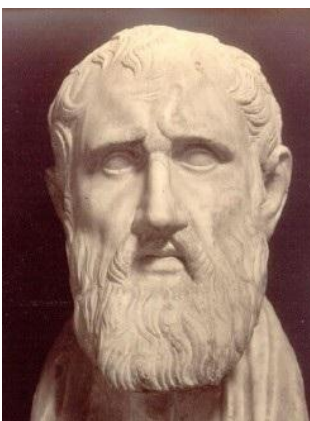


"Wellbeing is attained
by little and little,
and nevertheless is no
little thing itself."

Citium Zeno



God is not separate from
the world; He is the soul
of the world, and each of
us contains a part of the
Divine Fire. - Zeno



"Fate is the endless
chain of causation,
whereby things are;
the reason or formula
by which the world
goes on."

Citium Zeno

13. PROTAGORAS (490-420 BC)

Protagoras was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher and is numbered as one of the sophists by Plato. In his dialogue *Protagoras*, Plato credits him with having invented the role of the professional sophist or teacher of virtue

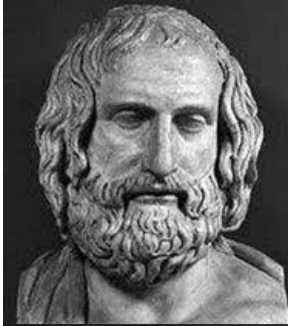
He is best known for his dictum "Man is the measure of all things," probably an expression of the relativity to the individual of all perceptions and, according to some, of all judgments as well.

Properties, social entities, ideas, feelings, judgements, etc. originate in the human mind. However, Protagoras has never suggested that man must be the measure of the motion of the stars, the growing of plants or the activity of volcanoes

Concerning the Gods, Protagoras wrote, I have no means of knowing whether they exist or not or what sort they may be because of the obscurity of the subject and the brevity of human life.

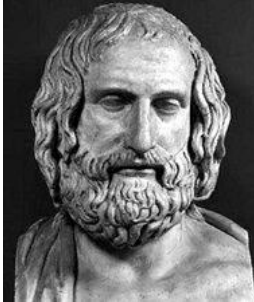
In Plato's *Protagoras*, he claims to teach "The proper management of one's own affairs, how best to run one's household, and the management of public affairs, how to make the most effective contribution to the affairs of the city by word and action"

Protagoras sees ethics as a shared project of learning to live together, and thinks it is part of our basic upbringing, an upbringing which is necessary for the existence of society at all.



"The Athenians are right to accept advice from anyone, since it is incumbent on everyone to share in that sort of excellence, or else there can be no city at all."

Protagoras



"No intelligent man believes that anybody ever willingly errs or willingly does base and evil deeds; they are well aware that all who do base and evil things do them unwillingly."

Protagoras

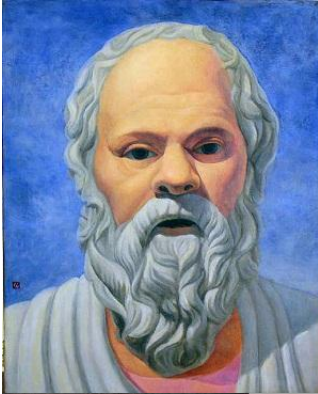


We are taught virtue as we are taught language- Protagoras

14. SOCRATES (469 -399 BC)

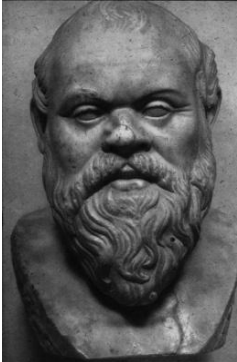
The Philosopher Socrates, who, despite having written nothing, is considered one of the handful of philosophers who forever changed how philosophy itself was to be conceived. Because his life is widely considered paradigmatic for the philosophic life and, more generally, for how anyone *ought* to live, Socrates has been encumbered with the admiration and emulation normally reserved for founders of religious sects—Jesus or Buddha—strange for someone who tried so hard to make others do their own thinking, and for someone convicted and executed on the charge of irreverence toward the gods. Socrates was asked to perform his own execution by consuming hemlock.

What seemed strange about Socrates is that he neither laboured to earn a living, nor participated voluntarily in affairs of state. Rather, he embraced poverty. Socrates' lifework consisted in the examination of people's lives, his own and others', because "the unexamined life is not worth living for a human being". Socrates pursued this task single-mindedly, questioning people about what matters most, e.g., courage, love, reverence, moderation, and the state of their souls generally. He helped others recognize on their own what is real, true, and good—a new, and thus suspect, approach to education. He was known for leading his conversation partners into the unpleasant experience of realizing their own ignorance. Socrates also acknowledged a rather strange personal phenomenon, a *daimonion* or internal voice that guided him which he regarded as divine or semi-divine.



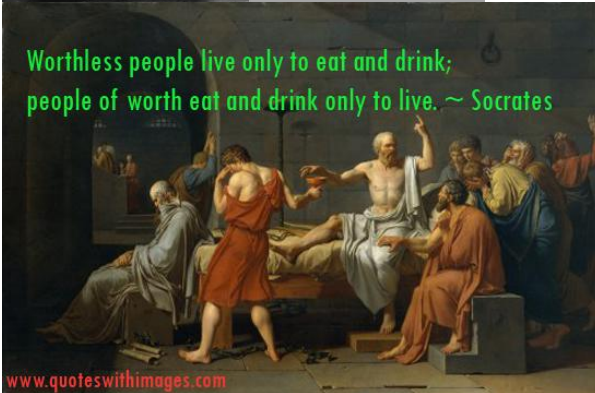
"Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writings, so that you shall gain easily what others have labored hard for."

Socrates



"One who is injured ought not to return the injury, for on no account can it be right to do an injustice; and it is not right to return an injury, or to do evil to any man, however much we have suffered from him."

Socrates



Worthless people live only to eat and drink;
people of worth eat and drink only to live. ~ Socrates

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15. PLATO (427-347 BC)

Plato was a Classical Greek philosopher, mathematician, student of Socrates, writer of philosophical dialogues, and founder of the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world.

The highest of the ideas is the Good. Sometimes Plato identifies this with God himself; more often it is the guiding instrument of creation, the supreme form towards which all things are drawn. To perceive this Good, to vision the moulding ideal of the creative process, is the loftiest goal of knowledge. Motion and creation are not mechanical; they require in the world, as in ourselves, a soul or principle of life as their originative power.

The soul's self-moving force in man, and is part of the self-moving Soul of all things. It is pure vitality, incorporeal and immortal. When through various existences the soul has been purified of all wrongdoing, it is freed from reincarnation, and mounts to a paradise of everlasting happiness.

For Plato, opinion concerned beautiful things whereas knowledge was about beauty itself. Crucially opinion was given by the senses while knowledge came from a much higher authority.

He states that rulers should be philosophers, or vice versa, so that there is the greatest possible distribution of skill for the good of the whole society.



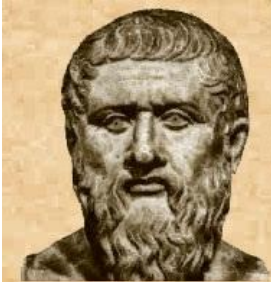
"All men are by nature equal, made all of the same earth by one Workman; and however we deceive ourselves, as dear unto God is the poor peasant as the mighty prince."

Plato



"Apply yourself both now and in the next life. Without effort, you cannot be prosperous. Though the land be good, You cannot have an abundant crop without cultivation."

Plato



"Astronomy compels the soul to look upwards and leads us from this world to another."

Plato

The aspect of Plato's work which has remained in the public consciousness is his concept of Platonic love.

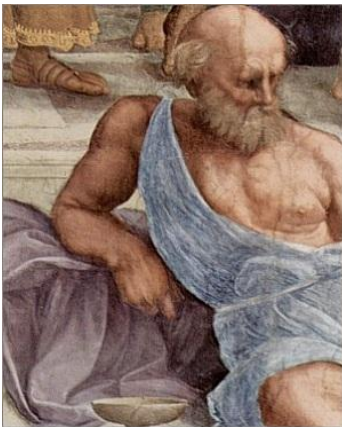
16. DIOGENES (412-323 BC)

Diogenes of Sinope was a Greek philosopher and one of the founders of Cynic philosophy. Also known as Diogenes the Cynic, he was born in Sinope, an Ionian colony on the Black Sea, in 412 or 404 BC and died at Corinth in 323 BC.

Diogenes had begged from actual want, and was pleased to learn that this was a part of virtue and wisdom. He adopted the beggar's garb, wallet, and staff, and for a time made his home in a tub in the court of the temple of Cybele at Athens. He envied the simple life of animals, and tried to imitate it; he slept on the ground, ate what he could find wherever he found it, and performed the duties of nature and the rites of love in the sight of all. Seeing a child drink from its hands, he threw away his cup. Sometimes he carried a candle or a lantern, saying that he was looking for an honest man. He injured no one, but refused to recognize laws, and announced himself, long before the Stoics, a kosmopolites, or Citizen of the World. On one of his journeys he was captured by pirates, who sold him as a slave to Xenias of Corinth. When his owner asked him what he could do, he answered, "Govern men." Xenias made him tutor of his sons and manager of his household, in which capacities Diogenes did so well that his master called him "a good genius," and took his advice in many things. Diogenes continued to live his simple life, so consistently that he became, next to Alexander, the most famous man in Greece.



Alexander, at Corinth, came upon Diogenes lying in the sun. "I am Alexander the Great King," said the ruler. "I am Diogenes the dog," said the philosopher. "Ask of me any favor you choose," said the King. "Stand out of the sun," answered Diogenes



"As a matter of self-preservation, a man needs good friends or ardent enemies, for the former instruct him and the latter take him to task."

Diogenes

17. ARISTOTLE (384-322 BC)

He studied (367-347 B.C.) under Plato and later (342-339 B.C.) tutored Alexander the Great at the Macedonian court. In 335 B.C. he opened a school in the Athenian Lyceum and is regarded as the father of Western Philosophy.

Aristotle said a happy life is a good life. Certain things are necessary to lasting happiness: good birth, good health, good looks, good luck, good reputation, good friends, good money and goodness. "No man can be happy who is absolutely ugly." The secret of happiness is action, the exercise of energy in a way suited to a man's nature and circumstances. Virtue is a practical wisdom, an intelligent appraisal of one's own good.

"He who is angry at what and with whom he ought," says Aristotle, "and further in right manner and time, and for a proper length of time, is praised". Virtue is not an act but a habit of doing the right thing.

"The most fortunate of men is he who combines a measure of prosperity with scholarship, research, or contemplation; such a man comes closer to the life of the gods." "Those who wish for an independent pleasure should seek it in philosophy, for all other pleasures need the assistance of men."

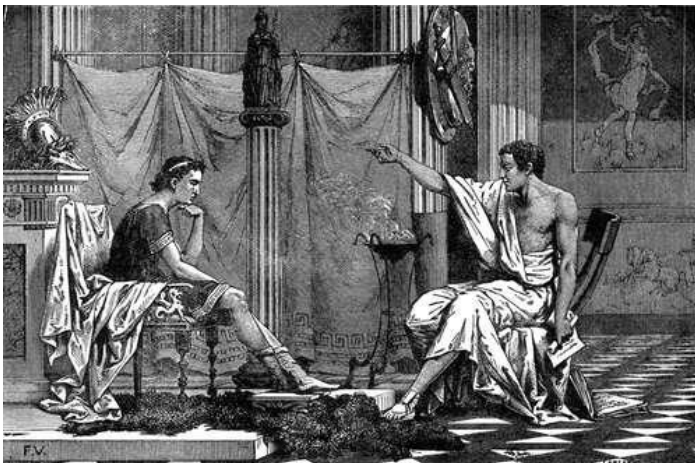
"Love is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies."

'At his best man is the noblest of all animals, separated from law and justice he is the worst."



*"I count him
braver who
overcomes his
desires than him
who conquers his
enemies; for the
hardest victory
is over self."*

Aristotle



Aristotle was the tutor to the young Alexander who later transformed Greek Civilization with his enormous empire.

18. MENCIUS (372-289 BC)

Mencius was a Chinese philosopher who was arguably the most famous Confucian after Confucius himself.

Human nature has an innate tendency towards goodness, but moral rightness cannot be instructed down to the last detail. This is why merely external controls always fail in improving society. True improvement results from educational cultivation in favorable environments. Likewise, bad environments tend to corrupt the human will.

Men have Four Beginnings. The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity; the feeling of shame and dislike is the beginning of righteousness; the feeling of deference and compliance is the beginning of propriety; and the feeling of right or wrong is the beginning of wisdom.

Individual effort was needed to cultivate oneself, but one's natural tendencies were good to begin with. The object of education is the cultivation of benevolence, otherwise known as Ren.

Mencius also believed in the power of Destiny in shaping the roles of human beings in society. What is destined cannot be contrived by the human intellect or foreseen. Destiny is shown when a path arises that is both unforeseen and constructive. Destiny should not be confused with Fate



"There is no greater delight than to be conscious of sincerity on self-examination."

Mencius



"Evil exists to glorify the good. Evil is negative good. It is a relative term. Evil can be transmuted into good. What is evil to one at one time, becomes good at another time to somebody else."

Mencius



"Let not a man do what his sense of right bids him not to do, nor desire what it forbids him to desire. This is sufficient. The skillful artist will not alter his measures for the sake of a stupid workman."

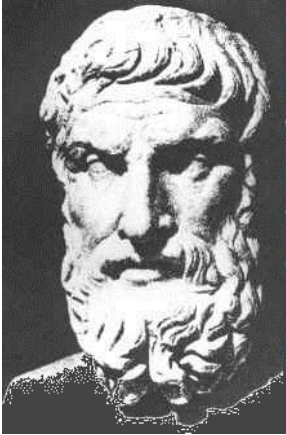
Mencius

19. EPICURUS (341-270 BC)

Epicurus was an ancient Greek philosopher as well as the founder of the school of philosophy called Epicureanism.

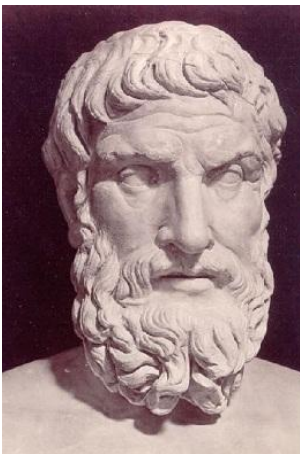
For Epicurus, the purpose of philosophy was to attain the happy, tranquil life, characterized by ataraxia—peace and freedom from fear—and aponia—the absence of pain—and by living a self-sufficient life surrounded by friends. He taught that pleasure and pain are the measures of what is good and evil; death is the end of both body and soul and should therefore not be feared; the gods do not reward or punish humans; the universe is infinite and eternal; and events in the world are ultimately based on the motions and interactions of atoms moving in empty space.

He was one of the first Greeks to break from the god-fearing and god-worshipping tradition common at the time. Epicurus participated in the activities of traditional Greek religion, but taught that one should avoid holding false opinions about the gods. The gods are immortal and blessed. The opinion of the crowd is, Epicurus claims, that the gods "send great evils to the wicked and great blessings to the righteous who model themselves after the gods," whereas Epicurus believes the gods, in reality, do not concern themselves at all with human beings.



"If God listened to the prayers of men, all men would quickly have perished: for they are forever praying for evil against one another."

Epicurus



"Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for."

Epicurus



"Let no one when young delay to study philosophy, nor when he is old, grow weary of his study. For no one can come too early or too late to secure the health of his soul."

EPICURUS

20. PHILO (20 BC-56 AD)

Philo the Jew was a Hellenistic Jewish Biblical philosopher born in Alexandria.

The soul is first aroused by the stimuli of sensual pleasures; it begins to turn toward them, and then becomes more and more involved. It becomes devoted to the body, and begins to lead an intolerable life. All the higher aspirations are stilled.

The worst consequence of this moral death is, according to Philo, absolute ignorance and the loss of the power of judgment. Sensual things are placed above spiritual; and wealth is regarded as the highest good. In the field of politics, for example, he attempts to rise from the position of leader of the people to that of ruler. Sensual man generally employs his intellectual powers for sophistry, perverting words and destroying truth.

The biblical patriarch Abraham is seen by Philo as the symbol of man leaving sensuality to turn to reason. Philo holds that there are three methods whereby one can rise toward the divine: through teaching, through practice, and through natural goodness

Philo holds that good moral endowment takes precedence of teaching and practice. Virtue here is not the result of hard labour, but is the excellent fruit maturing of itself.



Philo was a contemporary of Jesus Christ. He was highly influenced by Greek Platonic thought. Two of his quotes:

Households, cities, countries, and nations have enjoyed great happiness when a single individual has taken heed of the Good and Beautiful. Such people not only liberate themselves; they fill those they meet with a free mind

Those who give hoping to be rewarded with honour are not giving, they are bargaining.

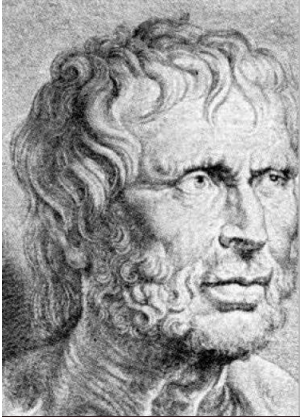
21. SENECA (4 BC- 65 AD)

Seneca is a major philosophical figure of the Roman Imperial Period. As a Stoic philosopher writing in Latin, Seneca makes a lasting contribution to Stoicism.

Seneca tells us that there is a much-debated choice between three kinds of life—the life of theory, the life of politics (or practice), and the life of pleasure. Philosophy has two functions. We need philosophical insight on which to base our actions. But we also need to devote time specifically to reflecting on such truths as that only virtue is good, and thus restore our peace of mind.

The world of politics is our local world; the world of philosophy is the whole world. By pursuing an active career in politics, we aim to do good to the people in our vicinity. By retreating into philosophy we choose to live, for a while, predominantly in the world at large. By studying, teaching, and writing philosophy, Seneca thinks, we help others who are not necessarily spatially close to us. Philosophical study is beneficial, it is of use to others, in the world-wide community to which we all belong

Seneca says: "What is required, you see, of any man is that he should be of use to other men—if possible, to many; failing that, to a few; failing that, to those nearest him; failing that, to himself."



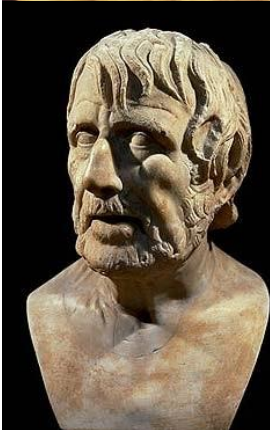
"Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by the rulers as useful."

Lucius Annaeus Seneca



"One of the most beautiful qualities of true friendship is to understand and to be understood."

Lucius Annaeus Seneca



"If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable. "

Lucius Annaeus Seneca

22. PLOTINUS (204-270 AD)

Plotinus was a major philosopher of the ancient world born in Egypt, studied Persian and Indian philosophy and settled down in Rome. In his system of theory there are the three principles: the One (the Good), the Intellect, and the Soul. He was a man at once otherworldly and deeply practical.

Plotinus, insisting that the best life is one that is in fact blessed owing precisely to its immunity to misfortune, alters the meaning of 'self-sufficient' in order to identify it with the interior life of the excellent person. This interiority or self-sufficiency is the obverse of attachment to the objects of embodied desires. Interiority is happiness because the longing for the Good, for one who is ideally an intellect, is satisfied by cognitive identification with all that is intelligible.

If this is not unqualifiedly possible for the embodied human being, it does at least seem possible that one should have a second order desire, deriving from this longing for the Good that amounts to a profound indifference to the satisfaction of first order desires.

An 65, Seneca was caught up in a plot to kill Nero. He was ordered by Nero to kill himself. He followed tradition by severing several veins in order to bleed to death, and his wife Pompeia Paulina attempted to share his fate



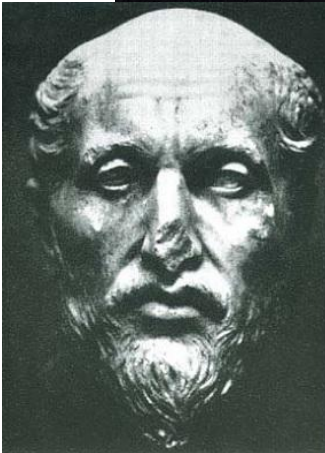
"God is not external to anyone, but is present with all things, though they are ignorant that he is so."

Plotinus



"Mankind is poised midway between the gods and the beasts."

Plotinus



"Being is desirable because it is identical with Beauty, and Beauty is loved because it is Being. We ourselves possess Beauty when we are true to our own being; ugliness is in going over to another order; knowing ourselves, we are beautiful; in self-ignorance, we are ugly."

Plotinus

23. MARCUS AURELIUS (121-180 AD)

Marcus Aurelius was Roman Emperor from 161 to 180 CE. He was the last of the "Five Good Emperors", and is also considered one of the most important members of the Stoic philosophers.

Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, written in Greek while on campaign between 170 and 180 AD, is still revered as a literary monument to a philosophy of service and duty, describing how to find and preserve equanimity in the midst of conflict by following nature as a source of guidance and inspiration.

Says Marcus: You are no longer able to have lived your whole life as a philosopher. Leave behind your reputation and be content even if you live the remainder of life, however long [it may be], as your nature wills. Consider what it wills, and let nothing else distract you. For your experience tells you how much you have strayed: nowhere in so-called reasoning, wealth, reputation, enjoyment, nowhere do you find living well. So where is it? In doing those things which human nature seeks? And how will one do these things? If one has doctrines from which [flow] one's impulses and actions. Which doctrines? Those concerning goods and evils: that nothing is good for a human being which does not make him just, temperate, courageous, free; that nothing is bad, which does not make him the contraries of the aforementioned.



"Accept the things to which fate binds you, and love the people with whom fate brings you together, but do so with all your heart."

Marcus Aurelius



"Live a good life. If there are gods and they are just, then they will not care how devout you have been, but will welcome you based on the virtues you have lived by. If there are gods, but unjust, then you should not want to worship them. If there are no gods, then you will be gone, but will have lived a noble life that will live on in the memories of your loved ones."

— Marcus Aurelius



"And thou wilt give thyself relief, if thou doest every act of thy life as if it were the last."

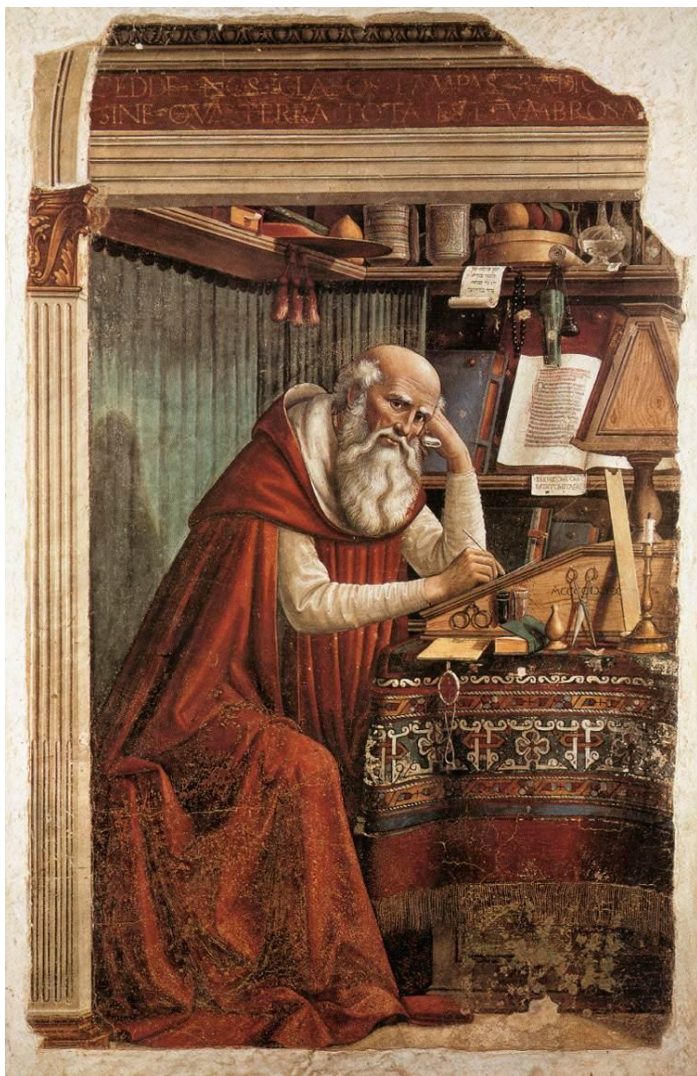
Marcus Aurelius

24. ST AUGUSTINE (354-430 AD)

Augustine was bishop of Hippo Regius (present-day Annaba, Algeria). He was a Latin philosopher and theologian from the Africa Province of the Roman Empire and is generally considered as one of the greatest Christian thinkers of all times.

Though he was one of the most intelligent men who ever lived and though he had been brought up a Christian, his sins of impurity and his pride darkened his mind so much, that he could not see or understand the Divine Truth anymore. One day he picked up the book of the Letters of St. Paul, and read the first passage his gaze fell on. It was just what Augustine needed, for in it, St. Paul says to put away all impurity and to live in imitation of Jesus. That did it! From then on, Augustine began a new life.

He was baptized, became a priest, a bishop, a famous Catholic writer, Founder of religious orders, and one of the greatest saints that ever lived. He became very devout and charitable, too. On the wall of his room he had the following sentence written in large letters: "Here we do not speak evil of anyone." St. Augustine overcame strong heresies, practiced great poverty and supported the poor, preached very often and prayed with great fervour right up until his death. "Too late have I loved You!" he once cried to God, but with his holy life he certainly made up for the sins he committed before his conversion



St Augustine: "Oh God, give me chastity, but not yet."

25. BOETHIUS (480-524 AD)

Boethius, was born of a consular family and studied philosophy, mathematics and poetry. Soon after 500 AD he was appointed a court minister by the Gothic king, Theodoric, now ruling Italy from Rome. Boethius was made consul in 510, and his two sons shared the same honor in 522. But his boldness brought down upon his head the vengeance of those whom he had checked in their oppressions. He was accused of treasonable designs against Theodoric, was stripped of his dignities, and, after imprisonment and torture at Pavia, was executed in 524.

During his imprisonment he wrote his famous *De Consolatione Philosophiae* in which the author holds a conversation with Philosophy, who shows him the mutability of all earthly fortune, and the insecurity of everything save virtue.

Because you have forgotten the means by which the world is governed you believe these ups and downs of fortune happen haphazardly. These are grave causes and they lead not only to illness but even death. Thanks, however, to the Author of all health, nature has not quite abandoned you. In your true belief about the world's government -- that it is subject to divine reason and not the haphazards of chance -- there lay our greatest hope of rekindling your health. You need to have no fears then, now that this tiny spark has blazed with the fire of life.



"A man content to go to heaven alone will never go to heaven."

Boethius



"Nothing is miserable unless you think it is so."

Boethius



"Music is part of us, and either ennobles or degrades our behavior."

Boethius

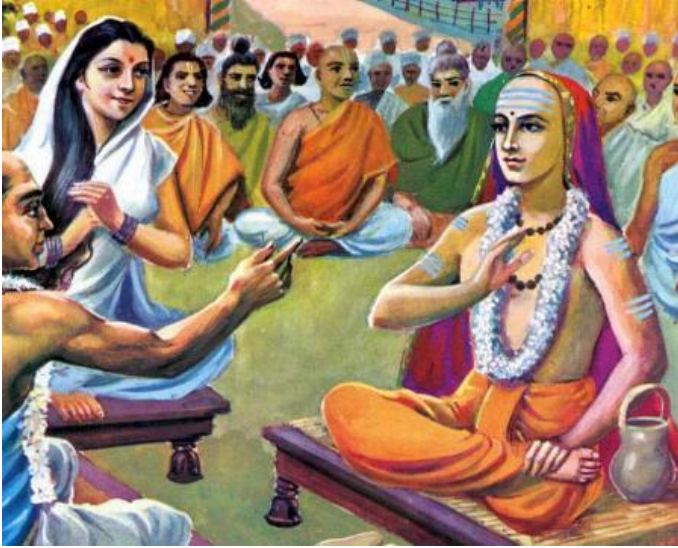
26. SHANKARA (788-820 AD)

Shankara defines God as existence, and cause and effect, the timeless and secret essence, of the world. Essentially *Brahman* is above personality and gender, beyond good and evil, above all moral distinctions, all differences and attributes, all desires and ends.

The goal of philosophy is to find that secret, and to lose the seeker in the secret found. To be one with God means, for Shankara, to rise above - or to sink beneath - the separateness and brevity of the self, with all its narrow purposes and interests; to become unconscious of all parts, divisions, things; to be placidly at one, in a desireless *Nirvana*, with great ocean of being in which there are no warring purposes, no competing selves, no parts, no change, no space, and no time.

To find this blissful peace a man must renounce not merely the world but himself; he must care nothing for possessions or goods, even for good or evil; he must look upon suffering and death as *Maya*.

The knowledge of saintly seer can bring that salvation which is the recognition of the identity of self and the universe, *Atma* and *Brahman*, soul and God and the absorption of the part in the whole. Only when this absorption is complete does the wheel of reincarnation stop, for then it is seen that the separate self and personality is an illusion.



Shankara in philosophical debate

Oh ignoramus, at the time of death the rules of grammar, which you are trying to cram and master, will not be able to rescue you at all.

The world which is full of attachments, aversions, etc., is like a dream. It appears to be real, as long as it continues but appears to be unreal when one is awake (i.e., when true wisdom dawns).

Day and night, dawn and dusk, winter and spring, all these are flitting across the stage of the world. While time thus is frolicking and befooling us, our life span is also running out; yet we do not, even a little, give up the clinging to our desires, nor do we let the desires loosen their grip on us.

Shankara's teachings can be summed up in half a verse:

"Brahman (the Absolute) is alone real; this world is unreal; and the Jiva or the individual soul is non-different from Brahman."

27. AVICENNA (980- 1037)

Avicenna achieved as well as any man the ever-sought reconciliation between the faith of the people and the reasoning of philosophers. He treats all questions with reason only, quite independently of Koran, and gives naturalistic analysis of inspiration; but he affirms the people's need of prophets who expound to them the laws of morality in forms and parables popularly intelligible and effective; in this sense, as laying or preserving the foundations of social and moral development, the prophet is God's messenger.

So Mohammed preached the resurrection of the body, and sometimes described heaven in material terms; the philosopher will doubt the immortality of the body, but he will recognize that if Mohammed had taught a purely spiritual heaven the people would not have listened to him, and would not have united into a disciplined and powerful nation.

Those who can worship God in spiritual love, entertaining neither hope nor fear, are the highest of mankind; but they will reveal this attitude only to their mature students, not to the multitude.

Avicenna did not wish to destroy religion for the sake of philosophy, nor, like al-Ghazali in the ensuing century, to destroy philosophy for the sake of religion

**And whenever
sleep seized me
I would see
those very problems
in my dream;
and many questions
became clear to me
in my sleep**

- Avicenna



**"Now it is established in
the sciences that no
knowledge is acquired save
through the study of its
causes and beginnings, if it
has had causes and
beginnings; nor completed
except by knowledge of its
accidents and accompanying
essentials."**

Avicenna



**"The world is divided
into men who have
wit and no religion
and men who have
religion and no wit."**

Avicenna



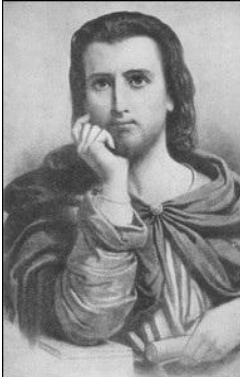
28. PETER ABELARD (1079-1142)

Peter Abelard began his career by seducing maiden Heloise, niece of the cathedral canon Fulbert with whom he stayed in Paris. For that Fulbert and his kinsmen cut off the offending part of his body.

Abelard wrote: "The first key to wisdom is assiduous and frequent questioning ... For by doubting we come to inquiry, and by inquiry we come to truth." Faith should be founded in human reason, and the contrary. Abelard opens up for debate such problems as Divine Providence vs. free will, the existence of sin and evil in a world created by a good and omnipotent God, and the possibility that God is not omnipotent.

He could not believe that all the wonderful pre-Christian minds had missed salvation; God, he insisted, gives His love to all peoples, Jews and heathen included. Abelard impenitently returned to the defence of reason in theology, and argued that heretics should be restrained by reason rather than by force. Those who recommend faith without understanding are in many cases seeking to cover up their inability to teach the faith intelligibly.

Abelard argued that sin lies not in the act but in the intention; no act - not even killing - is sinful in itself. Furthermore, that there should be sin; the agent must violate his own moral conscience.



"The first key to wisdom is assiduous and frequent questioning."

Peter Abelard



"Against the disease of writing one must take special precautions, since it is a dangerous and contagious disease."

Peter Abelard

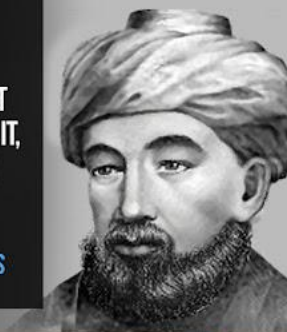
29. MAIMONIDES (1135-1204 AD)

Moses was only 13 years old when Cordova fell into the hands of the fanatical Almohades, and Maimon and all his coreligionists there were compelled to choose between Islam and exile. Maimon and his family chose the latter. Maimonides wrote on theodicy (the philosophical attempt to reconcile the existence of a God with the existence of evil). He took the premise that an omnipotent and good God exists. He also writes that there are people who are guided by higher purpose and there are those who are guided by physicality and must strive to find the higher purpose with which to guide their actions.

Maimonides says that evil is merely the absence of good, so God didn't create a thing called evil, rather God created good and evil is something that exists where good is absent. God therefore created only the good things and not the bad things – the bad things come secondarily. Maimonides also contests the common view that evil outweighs good in the world by saying that if you look at some individual cases this may be so, but if you look at the whole universe, good is significantly more common than evil. Maimonides also believes that there are three types of evil in the world; evil caused by nature, evil that people bring upon others and evil brought upon oneself by people falling victim to their physical desires.

“ TRUTH DOES NOT BECOME MORE TRUE BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT THAT THE ENTIRE WORLD AGREES WITH IT, NOR LESS SO EVEN IF THE WHOLE WORLD DISAGREES WITH IT.

-MAIMONIDES



PLEASE SHARE WITH YOUR FRIENDS!

space...



"Anticipate charity by preventing poverty."

Maimonides



"Do not consider it proof just because it is written in books, for a liar who will deceive with his tongue will not hesitate to do the same with his pen."

Maimonides

30. ST THOMAS AQUINAS (1225-74 AD)

Thomas argued that the first and major formal difference between philosophy and theology is found in their principle, that is, starting points. The presuppositions of the philosopher, that to which his discussions and arguments are ultimately driven back, are in the public domain. They are things that everyone can know upon reflection. By contrast, the discourse of the theologian is ultimately driven back to starting points or principles that are held to be true on the basis of faith, that is, the truths that are authoritatively conveyed by Revelation as revealed by God.

Thomas believed "that for the knowledge of any truth whatsoever man needs divine help, that the intellect may be moved by God to its act." However, he believed that human beings have the natural capacity to know many things without special divine revelation.

But this is the light that is given to man by God according to man's nature

Thomas defined the four cardinal virtues as prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude. The cardinal virtues are natural and revealed in nature, and they are binding on everyone. There are, however, three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity. These are somewhat supernatural and are distinct from other virtues in their object, namely, God.

QUOTES OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

"To convert somebody, go and take them by the hand and guide them."



GOD BLESS YOU ALL

HOLY TRINITY PALACE



There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship.

~St. Thomas Aquinas

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"Angels transcend every religion, every philosophy, every creed. In fact angels have no religion as we know it... their existence precedes every religious system that has ever existed on earth."

St. Thomas Aquinas

31. KABIR (1398-1518)

Kabir was a mystic poet and sant of India, whose writings have greatly influenced the Devotion movement. The name Kabir comes from Arabic *a/-Kabīr* which means 'The Great' – the 37th name of God in Islam. Apart from having an important influence on Sikhism, Kabir's legacy is today carried forward by the Kabir Panth ("Path of Kabir"), a religious community that recognizes him as its founder. He did not become a sadhu, nor did he ever abandon worldly life. Kabir chose instead to live the balanced life of a householder and mystic, a tradesman and contemplative.

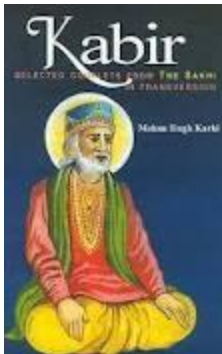
Kabir is the first Indian saint to have harmonized Hinduism and Islam by preaching a universal path which both Hindus and Muslims could tread together.

The basic religious principles he espoused are simple. According to Kabir, all life is interplay of two spiritual principles. One is the personal soul (*Jivatma*) and the other is God (*Paramatma*). It is Kabir's view that salvation is the process of bringing these two divine principles into union.

He vehemently opposed dogmas, both in Hinduism and in Islam. He often advocated leaving aside the Qur'an and Vedas and simply following Sahaja path, or the Simple/Natural Way to oneness in God.



Don't open your diamonds in a vegetable market. Tie them in bundle and keep them in your heart, and go your own way. [Don't discuss gyan (knowledge) with those who cannot understand it]. - Kabir.



***Do not go to the garden of flowers!
O friend! go not there;
In your body is the garden of flowers.
Take your seat on the thousand petals of the
lotus, and there gaze on the infinite beauty. -Kabir;
Translated by Rabindra Nath Tagore***