

Pythagoras

Featured Texts:

Porphry's Life of Pythagoras, also translated by Kenneth Guthrie in his *Pythagoras Source Book*. Verses Golden and Divine, or the 'Golden Verses of Pythagoras', was translated by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie in his *Pythagoras Source Book and Library* (Platonist Press, 1919.) Select Sentences of Sextus, the Golden Sentences of Democrates, the Sentences of Demophilus, the Similitudes of Demophilus and the Pythagorean Ethical Sentences from Stobaeus are taken from *The Golden Verses of Pythagoras And Other Pythagorean Fragments* selected and arranged by Florence M. Firth (1904) In it she said: The Golden Sentences of Democrates, the Similitudes of Demophilus, and Pythagorean Symbols are from Bridgman's translation, and are to be found in his little book, *Translations from the Greek*, published in 1804. The Pythagorean Sentences of Demophilus, translated by Taylor, are contained in that volume also. This document is in the public domain.

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Porphry's 'The Life of Pythagoras'

1. Many think that Pythagoras was the son of Mnesarchus, but they differ as to the latter's race; some thinking him a Samian, while Neanthes, in the fifth book of his *Fables* states he was a Syrian, from the city of Tyre. As a famine had arisen in Samos, Mnesarchus went thither to trade, and was naturalized there. There also was born his son Pythagoras, who early manifested studiousness, but was later taken to Tyre, and there entrusted to the Chaldeans, whose doctrines he imbibed. Thence he returned to Ionia, where he first studied under the Syrian Pherecydes, then also under Hermodamas the Creophylion who at that time was an old man residing in Samos.

2. Neanthes says that others hold that his father was a Tyrrhenian, of those who inhabit Lemnos, and that while on a trading trip to Samos was there naturalized. On sailing to Italy, Mnesarchus took the youth Pythagoras with him. Just at this time this country was greatly flourishing. Neanthes adds that Pythagoras had two older brothers, Eunostus and Tyrrhenus. But Apollonius, in his book about Pythagoras, affirms that his mother was Pythais, a descendant, of Ancaeus, the founder of Samos. Apollonius adds that he was said to be the off-spring of Apollo and Pythais, on the authority of Mnesarchus; and a Samian poet sings:

“Pythais, of all Samians the most fair;
Jove-loved Pythagoras to Phoebus bare!”

This poet says that Pythagoras studied not only under Pherecydes and Hermodamas, but also under

Anaximander.

3. The Samian Duris, in the second book of his *Hours*, writes that his son was named Arimnestus, that he was the teacher of Democritus, and that on returning from banishment, he suspended a brazen tablet in the temple of Hera, a tablet two feet square, bearing this inscription:

“Me, Arimnestus, who much learning traced,
Pythagoras’s beloved son here placed.”

This tablet was removed by Simus, a musician, who claimed the canon graven thereon, and published it as his own. Seven arts were engraved, but when Simus took away one, the others were destroyed.

4. It is said that by Theano, a Cretan, the daughter of Pythonax, he had a son, Thelages and a daughter, Myia; to whom some add Arignota, whose Pythagorean writings are still extant. Timaeus relates that Pythagoras’s daughter, while a maiden, took precedence among the maidens in Crotona, and when a wife, among married men. The Crotonians made her house a temple of Demeter, and the neighboring street they called a museum.

5. Lycus, in the fourth book of his *Histories*, noting different opinions about his country, says, “Unless you happen to know the country and the city which Pythagoras was a citizen, will remain a mere matter of conjecture. Some say he was a Samian, others, a Phliasian, others a Metapontine.”

6. As to his knowledge, it is said that he learned the mathematical sciences from the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Phoenicians; for of old the Egyptians excelled, in geometry, the Phoenicians in numbers and proportions, and the Chaldeans of astronomical theorems, divine rites, and worship of the Gods; other secrets concerning the course of life he received and learned from the Magi.

7. These accomplishments are the more generally known, but the rest are less celebrated. Moreover Eudoxus, in the second book of his *Description of the Earth*, writes that Pythagoras used the greatest purity, and was shocked at all bloodshed and killing; that he not only abstained from animal food, but never in any way approached butchers or hunters. Antiphon, in his book *On Illustrious Virtuous Men* praises his perseverance while he was in Egypt, saying that Pythagoras, desiring to become acquainted with the institutions of Egyptian priests, and diligently endeavoring to participate therein, requested the Tyrant Polycrates to write to Amasis, the King of Egypt, his friend and former host, to procure him initiation. Coming to Amasis, he was given letters to the priests; of Heliopolis, who sent him on to those of Memphis, on the pretense that the were the more ancient. On the same pretense, he was sent on from Memphis to Diospolis.

8. From fear of the King the latter priests dared not make excuses; but thinking that he would desist from his purpose as result of great difficulties, enjoined on him very hard precepts, entirely different from the institutions of the Greeks. These he performed so readily that he won their admiration, and they permitted him to sacrifice to the Gods, and to acquaint himself with all their sciences, a favor theretofore never granted to a foreigner.

9. Returning to Ionia, he opened in his own country, a school, which is even now called Pythagoras’s Semicircles, in which the Samians meet to deliberate about matters of common interest. Outside the city he made a cave adapted to the study of his philosophy, in which he abode day and night, discoursing with a few of his associates. He was now forty years old, says Aristoxenus. Seeing that Polycrates’s government was becoming so violent that soon a free man would become a victim of his tyranny, he journeyed towards Italy.

10. Diogenes, in his treatise *About the Incredible Things Beyond Thule*, has treated Pythagoras’s affairs so carefully, that I think his account should not be omitted. He says that the Tyrrhenian Mnesarchus was of the race of the inhabitants of Lemnos, Imbros and Scyros and that he departed thence to visit many cities and various lands. During his journeys he found an infant lying under a large, tall poplar tree. On approaching, he observed it lay on its back, looking steadily without winking at the sun. In its mouth was

a little slender reed, like a pipe; through which the child was being nourished by the dew-drops that distilled from the tree. This great wonder prevailed upon him to take the child, believing it to be of a divine origin. The child was fostered by a native of that country, named Androcles, who later on adopted him, and entrusted to him the management of affairs. On becoming wealthy, Mnesarchus educated the boy, naming him Astrasus, and rearing him with his own three sons, Eunestus, Tyrrhenus, and Pythagoras; which boy, as I have said, Androcles adopted.

11. He sent the boy to a lute-player, a wrestler and a painter. Later he sent him to Anaximander at Miletus, to learn geometry and astronomy. Then Pythagoras visited the Egyptians, the Arabians, the Chaldeans and the Hebrews, from whom he acquired expertise in the interpretation of dreams, and he was the first to use frankincense in the worship of divinities.

12. In Egypt he lived with the priests, and learned the language and wisdom of the Egyptians, and three kinds of letters, the epistolic, the hieroglyphic, and symbolic, whereof one imitates the common way of speaking, while the others express the sense by allegory and parable. In Arabia he conferred with the King. In Babylon he associated with the other Chaldeans, especially attaching himself to Zabratius, by whom he was purified from the pollutions of this past life, and taught the things which a virtuous man ought to be free. Likewise he heard lectures about Nature, and the principles of wholes. It was from his stay among these foreigners that Pythagoras acquired the greater part of his wisdom.

13. Astraeus was by Mnesarchus entrusted to Pythagoras, who received him, and after studying his physiognomy and the emotions of his body, instructed him. First he accurately investigated the science about the nature of man, discerning the disposition of everyone he met. None was allowed to become his friend or associate without being examined in facial expression and disposition.

14. Pythagoras had another youthful disciple from Thrace. Zamolxis was he named because he was born wrapped in a bear's skin, in Thracian called Zalmus. Pythagoras loved him, and instructed him in sublime speculations concerning sacred rites, and the nature of the Gods. Some say this youth was named Thales, and that the barbarians worshipped him as Hercules.

15. Dionysiphanes says that he was a servant of Pythagoras, who fell into the hands of thieves and by them was branded. Then when Pythagoras was persecuted and banished, (he followed him) binding up his forehead on account of the scars. Others say that, the name Zamolxis signifies a stranger or foreigner. Pherecydes, in Delos fell sick; and Pythagoras attended him until he died, and performed his funeral rites. Pythagoras then, longing to be with Hermodamas the Creophylian, returned to Samos. After enjoying his society, Pythagoras trained the Samian athlete Eurymenes, who though he was of small stature, conquered at Olympia through his surpassing knowledge of Pythagoras' wisdom. While according to ancient custom the other athletes fed on cheese and figs, Eurymenes, by the advice of Pythagoras, fed daily on flesh, which endued his body with great strength. Pythagoras imbued him with his wisdom, exhorting him to go into the struggle, not for the sake of victory, but the exercise; that he should gain by the training, avoiding the envy resulting from victory. For the victors, are not always pure, though decked with leafy crowns.

16. Later, when the Samians were oppressed with the tyranny of Polycrates, Pythagoras saw that life in such a state was unsuitable for a philosopher, and so planned to travel to Italy. At Delphi he inscribed an elegy on the tomb of Apollo, declaring that Apollo was the son of Silenus, but was slain by Pytho, and buried in the place called Triops, so named from the local mourning for Apollo by the three daughters of Triopas.

17. Going to Crete, Pythagoras besought initiation from the priests of Morgos, one of the Idaean Dactyli, by whom he was purified with the meteoritic thunder-stone. In the morning he lay stretched upon his face by the seaside; at night, he lay beside a river, crowned with a black lamb's woolen wreath. Descending into the Idaean cave, wrapped in black wool, he stayed there twenty-seven days, according to custom; he sacrificed to Zeus, and saw the throne which there is yearly made for him. On Zeus's tomb,

Pythagoras inscribed an epigram, "Pythagoras to Zeus," which begins: "Zeus deceased here lies, whom men call Jove."

18. When he reached Italy he stopped at Crotona. His presence was that of a free man, tall, graceful in speech and gesture, and in all things else. Dicaearchus relates that the arrival of this great traveler, endowed with all the advantages of nature, and prosperously guided by fortune, produced on the Crotonians so great an impression, that he won the esteem of the elder magistrates, by his many and excellent discourses. They ordered him to exhort the young men, and then to the boys who flocked out of the school to hear him; and lastly to the women, who came together on purpose.

19. Through this he achieved great reputation, he drew great audiences from the city, not only of men, but also of women, among whom was a specially illustrious person named Theano. He also drew audiences from among the neighboring barbarians, among whom were magnates and kings. What he told his audiences cannot be said with certainty, for he enjoined silence upon his hearers. But the following is a matter of general information. He taught that the soul was immortal and that after death it transmigrated into other animated bodies. After certain specified periods, the same events occur again; that nothing was entirely new; that all animated beings were kin, and should be considered as belonging to one great family. Pythagoras was the first one to introduce these teachings into Greece.

20. His speech was so persuasive that, according to Nicomachus, in one address made on first landing in Italy he made more than two thousand adherents. Out of desire to live with him, [.....], to which both women and built a large auditorium, to which both women and boys were admitted. (Foreign visitors were so many that) they built whole cities, settling that whole region of Italy now known as Magna Grecia. His ordinances and laws were by them received as divine precepts, and without them would do nothing. Indeed they ranked him among the divinities. They held all property in common. They ranked him among the divinities, and whenever they communicated to each other some choice bit of his philosophy, from which physical truths could always be deduced, they would swear by the Tetractys, adjuring Pythagoras as a divine witness, in the words:

I call to witness him who to our souls expressed

The Tetractys, eternal Nature's fountain-spring.

21. During his travels in Italy and Sicily he founded various cities subjected one to another, both of long standing, and recently. By his disciples, some of whom were found in every city, he infused into them an aspiration for liberty; thus restoring to freedom Crotona, Sybaris, Catana, Rhegium, Himera, Agrigentum, Tauromenium, and others, on whom he imposed laws through Charondas the Catanian, and Zaleucus the Locrian, which resulted in a long era of good government, emulated by all their neighbors. Simichus the tyrant of the Centorupini, on hearing Pythagoras's discourse, abdicated his rule and divided his property between his sister and the citizens.

22. According to Aristoxenus, some Lucanians, Messapians, Picentini and Romans came to him. He rooted out all dissensions, not only among his disciples and their successors, for many ages, but among all the cities of Italy and Sicily, both internally and externally. He was continuously harping on the maxim, "We ought, to the best of our ability avoid, and even with fire and sword extirpate from the body, sickness; from the soul, ignorance; from the belly, luxury; from a city, sedition; from a family, discord; and from all things excess."

23. If we may credit what ancient and trustworthy writers have related of him, he exerted an influence even over irrational animals. The Daunian bear, who had committed extensive depredations in the neighborhood, he seized; and after having patted her for awhile, and given her barley and fruits, he made her swear never again to touch a living creature, and then released her. She immediately hid herself in the woods and the hills, and from that time on never attacked any irrational animal.

24. At Tarentum, in a pasture, seeing an ox [reaping] beans, he went to the herdsman, and advised him to tell the ox to abstain from beans. The countryman mocked him, proclaiming his ignorance of the

ox-language. So Pythagoras himself went and whispered in the ox's ear. Not only did the bovine at once desist from his diet of beans, but would never touch any thenceforward, though he survived many years near Hera's temple at Tarentum, until very old; being called the sacred ox, and eating any food given him.

25. While at the Olympic games, he was discoursing with his friends about auguries, omens, and divine signs, and how men of true piety do receive messages from the Gods. Flying over his head was an eagle, who stopped, and came down to Pythagoras. After stroking her awhile, he released her. Meeting with some fishermen who were drawing in their nets heavily laden with fishes from the deep, he predicted the exact number of fish they had caught. The fishermen said that if his estimate was accurate they would do whatever he commanded. They counted them accurately, and found the number correct. He then bade them return the fish alive into the sea; and, what is more wonderful, not one of them died, although they had been out of the water a considerable time. He paid them and left.

26. Many of his associates he reminded of the lives lived by their souls before it was bound to the body, and by irrefutable arguments demonstrated that he had been Euphorbus, the son of Panthus. He specially praised the following verses about himself, and sang them to the lyre most elegantly:

The shining circlets of his golden hair;
Which even the Graces might be proud to wear,
Instarred with gems and gold, bestrew the shore,
With dust dishonored, and deformed with gore.
As the young olive, in some sylvan scene,
Crowned by fresh fountains with celestial green,
Lifts the gay head, in snowy flowerets fair,
And plays and dances to the gentle air,
When lo, a whirlwind from high heaven invades,
The tender plant, and withers all its shades;
It lies uprooted from its genial head,
A lovely ruin now defaced and dead.
Thus young, thus beautiful, Euphorbus lay,
While the fierce Spartan tore his arms away.

(Pope, Homer's Iliad, Book 17).

27. The stories about the shield of this Phrygian Euphorbus being at Mycenae dedicated to Argive Hera, along with other Trojan spoils, shall here be omitted as being of too popular a nature. It is said that the river Caicasus, while he with many of his associates was passing over it, spoke to him very clearly, "Hail, Pythagoras!" Almost unanimous is the report that on one and the same day he was present at Metapontum in Italy, and at Tauromenium in Sicily, in each place conversing with his friends, though the places are separated by many miles, both at sea and land, demanding many days' journey.

28. It is well known that he showed his golden thigh to Abaris the Hyperborean, to confirm him in the opinion that he was the Hyperborean Apollo, whose priest Abaris was. A ship was coming into the harbor, and his friends expressed the wish to own the goods it contained. "Then," said Pythagoras, "you would own a corpse!" On the ship's arrival, this was found to be the true state of affairs. Of Pythagoras many other more wonderful and divine things are persistently and unanimously related, so that we have no hesitation in saying never was more attributed to any man, nor was any more eminent.

29. Verified predictions of earthquakes are handed down, also that he immediately chased a pestilence, suppressed violent winds and hail, calmed storms both on rivers and on seas, for the comfort and safe passage of his friends. As their poems attest, the like was often performed by Empedocles, Epimenides and Abaris, who had learned the art of doing these things from him. Empedocles, indeed, was surnamed Alexanemos, as the chaser of winds; Epimenides, Cathartes, the lustrator. Abaris was

called Aethrobates, the walker in air; for he was carried in the air on an arrow of the Hyperborean Apollo, over rivers, seas and inaccessible places. It is believed that this was the method employed by Pythagoras when on the same day he discoursed with his friends at Metapontum and Tauromenium.

30. He soothed the passions of the soul and body by rhythms, songs and incantations. These he adapted and applied to his friends. He himself could hear the harmony of the Universe, and understood the universal music of the spheres, and of the stars which move in concert with them, and which we cannot hear because of the limitations of our weak nature. This is testified to by these characteristic verses of Empedocles:

Amongst these was one in things sublimest skilled,
His mind with all the wealth of learning filled,
Whatever sages did invent, he sought;
And whilst his thoughts were on this work intent,
All things existent, easily he viewed,
Through ten or twenty ages making search.

31. Indicating by *sublimest things*, and, he *surveyed all existent things*, and *the wealth of the mind*, and the like, Pythagoras's constitution of body, mind, seeing, hearing and understanding, which was exquisite, and surpassingly accurate, Pythagoras affirmed that the nine Muses were constituted by the sounds made by the seven planets, the sphere of the fixed stars, and that which is opposed to our earth, called "anti-earth." He called *Mnemosyne*, or Memory, the composition, symphony and connexion of them all, which is eternal and unbegotten as being composed of all of them.

32. Diogenes, setting forth his daily routine of living, relates that he advised all men to avoid ambition and vain-glory, which chiefly excite envy, and to shun the presences of crowds. He himself held morning conferences at his residence, composing his soul with the music of the lute, and singing certain old paeans of Thales. He also sang verses of Homer and Hesiod, which seemed to soothe the mind. He danced certain dances which he conceived conferred on the body agility and health. Walks he took not promiscuously, but only in company of one or two companions, in temples or sacred groves, selecting the quietest and pleasantest places.

33. His friends he loved exceedingly, being the first to declare that the goods of friends are common, and that a friend was another self. While they were in good health he always conversed with them; if they were sick, he nursed them; if they were afflicted in mind, he solaced them, some by incantations and magic charms, others by music. He had prepared songs for the diseases of the body, by the singing of which he cured the sick. He had also some that caused oblivion of sorrow, mitigation of anger and destruction of lust.

34. As to food, his breakfast was chiefly of honey; at dinner he used bread made of millet, barley or herbs, raw and boiled. Only rarely did he eat the flesh of victims; nor did he take this from every part of the anatomy. When he intended to sojourn in the sanctuaries of the divinities, he would eat no more than was necessary to still hunger and thirst. To quiet hunger, he made a mixture of poppy seed and sesame, the skin of a sea-onion, well washed, till entirely drained of the outward juice; of the flower of the daffodil, and the leaves of mallows, of paste of barley and pea; taking an equal weight of which, and chopping it small, with Hymettian honey he made it into mass. Against thirst he took the seed of cucumbers, and the best dried raisins, extracting the seeds, and the flower of coriander, and the seeds of mallows, purselain, scraped cheese, meal and cream; these he made up with wild honey.

35. He claimed that this diet had, by Demeter, been taught to Hercules, when he was sent into the Libyan deserts. This preserved his body in an unchanging condition; not at one time well, and at another time sick, nor at one time fat, and at another lean. Pythagoras's countenance showed the same constancy was in his soul also. For he was neither more elated by pleasure, nor dejected by grief, and no one ever saw him either rejoicing or mourning.

36. When Pythagoras sacrificed to the Gods, he did not use offensive profusion, but offered no more than barley bread, cakes and myrrh; least of all, animals, unless perhaps cocks and pigs. When he discovered the proposition that the square on the hypotenuse of a right angled triangle was equal to the squares on the sides containing the right angle, he is said to have sacrificed an ox, although the more accurate say that this ox was made of flour.

37. His utterances were of two kinds, plain or symbolical. His teaching was twofold: of his disciples some were called Students, and others Hearers. The Students learned the fuller and more exactly elaborate reasons of science, while the Hearers heard only the chief heads of learning, without more detailed explanations.

38. He ordained that his disciples should speak well and think reverently of the Gods, muses and heroes, and likewise of parents and benefactors; that they should obey the laws; that they should not relegate the worship of the Gods to a secondary position, performing it eagerly, even at home; that to the celestial divinities they should sacrifice uncommon offerings; and ordinary ones to the inferior deities. (The world he Divided into) opposite powers; the “one” was a better *monad*, light, right, equal, stable and straight; while the “other” was an inferior *duad*, darkness, left, unequal, unstable and movable.

39. Moreover, he enjoined the following. A cultivated and fruit-bearing plant, harmless to man and beast, should be neither injured nor destroyed. A deposit of money or of teachings should be faithfully preserved by the trustee. There are three kinds of things that deserve to be pursued and acquired; honorable and virtuous things, those that conduce to the use of life, and those that bring pleasures of the blameless, solid and grave kind, of course not the vulgar intoxicating kinds. Of pleasures there were two kinds; one that indulges the bellies and lusts by a profusion of wealth, which he compared to the murderous songs of the Sirens; the other kind consists of things honest, just, and necessary to life, which are just as sweet as the first, without being followed by repentance; and these pleasures he compared to the harmony of the Muses.

40. He advised special regard to two times; that when we go to sleep, and that when we awake. At each of these we should consider our past actions, and those that are to come. We ought to require of ourselves an account of our past deeds, while of the future we should have a providential care. Therefore he advised everybody to repeat to himself the following verses before he fell asleep:

Nor suffer sleep to close thine eyes
Till thrice thy acts that day thou hast run o'er;
How slipt? What deeds? What duty left undone?

On rising:

As soon as ere thou wakest, in order lay
The actions to be done that following day

41. Such things taught he, though advising above all things to speak the truth, for this alone deifies men. For as he had learned from the Magi, who call God Oremasdes, God's body is light, and his soul is truth. He taught much else, which he claimed to have learned from Aristoclea at Delphi. Certain things he declared mystically, symbolically, most of which were collected by Aristotle, as when he called the sea a *tear of Saturn*; the two bear (constellations) *the hand of Rhea*; the Pleiades, *the lyre of the Muses*; the Planets, *the dogs of Persephone*; and he called the sound caused by striking on brass the voice of a genius enclosed in the brass.

42. He had also another kind of symbol, such as, pass not over a balance; that is, Shun avarice. Poke not the fire with a sword, that is, we ought not to excite a man full of fire and anger with sharp language. Pluck not a crown, meant not to violate the laws, which are the crowns of cities. Eat not the heart, signified not to afflict ourselves with sorrows. Do not sit upon a [pack]-measure, meant, do not live ignobly. On starting a journey, do not turn back, meant, that this life should not be regretted, when near

the bourne of death. Do not walk in the public way, meant, to avoid the opinions of the multitude, adopting those of the learned and the few. Receive not swallows into your house, meant, not to admit under the same roof garrulous and intemperate men. Help a man to take up a burden, but not to lay it down, meant, to encourage no one to be indolent, but to apply oneself to labor and virtue. Do not carry the images of the Gods in rings, signified that one should not at once to the vulgar reveal one's opinions about the Gods, or discourse about them. Offer libations to the Gods, just to the ears of the cup, meant, that we ought to worship and celebrate the Gods with music, for that penetrates through the ears. Do not eat those things that are unlawful, sexual or increase, beginning nor end, nor the first basis of all things.

43. He taught abstention from the loins, testicles, pudenda, marrow, feet and heads of victims. The loins he called *basis*, because on them as foundations living beings are settled. Testicles and pudenda he called *generation*, for no one is engendered without the help of these. Marrow he called *increase* as it is the cause of growth in living beings. The *beginning* was the feet, and the head the end; which have the most power in the government of the body. He likewise advised abstention from beans, as from human flesh.

44. Beans were interdicted, it is said, because the particular plants grow and individualize only after (the earth) which is the principle and origin of things, is mixed together, so that many things underground are confused, and coalesce; after which everything rots together. Then living creatures were produced together with plants, so that both men and beans arose out of putrefaction whereof he alleged many manifest arguments. For if anyone should chew a bean, and having ground it to a pulp with his teeth, and should expose that pulp to the warm sun, for a short while, and then return to it, he will perceive the scent of human blood. Moreover, if at the time when beans bloom, one should take a little of the flower, which then is black, and should put it into an earthen vessel, and cover it closely, and bury in the ground for ninety days, and at the end thereof take it up, and uncover it, instead of the bean he will find either the head of an infant, or the pudenda of a woman.

45. He also wished men to abstain from other things, such as a swine's paunch, a mullet, and a sea-fish called a "nettle," and from nearly all other marine animals. He referred his origin to those of past ages, affirming that he was first Euphorbus, then Aethalides, then Hermotimus, then Pyrrhus, and last, Pythagoras. He showed to his disciples that the soul is immortal, and to those who were rightly purified he brought back the memory of the acts of their former lives.

46. He cultivated philosophy, the scope of which is to free the mind implanted within us from the impediments and fetters within which it is confined; without whose freedom none can learn anything sound or true, or perceive the unsoundedness in the operation of sense. Pythagoras thought that mind alone sees and hears, while all the rest are blind and deaf. The purified mind should be applied to the discovery of beneficial things, which can be effected by, certain artificial ways, which by degrees induce it to the contemplation of eternal and incorporeal things, which never vary. This orderliness of perception should begin from consideration of the most minute things, lest by any change the mind should be jarred and withdraw itself, through the failure of continuousness in its subject-matter.

47. That is the reason he made so much use of the mathematical disciplines and speculations, which are intermediate between the physical and the incorporeal realm, for the reason that like bodies they have a threefold dimension, and yet share the impassibility of incorporeals; as degrees of preparation to the contemplation of the really existent things; by an artificial reason diverting the eyes of the mind from corporeal things, whose manner and state never remain in the same condition, to a desire for true (spiritual) food. By means of these mathematical sciences therefore, Pythagoras rendered men truly happy, by this artistic introduction of truly [consistent] things.

48. Among others, Moderatus of Gades, who [learnedly] treated of the qualities of numbers in seven books, states that the Pythagoreans specialized in the study of numbers to explain their teachings symbolically, as do geometers, inasmuch as the primary forms and principles are hard to understand

and express, otherwise, in plain discourse. A similar case is the representation of sounds by letters, which are known by marks, which are called the first elements of learning; later, they inform us these are not the true elements, which they only signify.

49. As the geometricians cannot express incorporeal forms in words, and have recourse to the descriptions of figures, as that is a triangle, and yet do not mean that the actually seen lines are the triangle, but only what they represent, the knowledge in the mind, so the Pythagoreans used the same objective method in respect to first reasons and forms. As these incorporeal forms and first principles could not be expressed in words, they had recourse to demonstration by numbers. Number one denoted to them the reason of Unity, Identity, Equality, the purpose of friendship, sympathy, and conservation of the Universe, which results from persistence in Sameness. For unity in the details harmonizes all the parts of a whole, as by the participation of the First Cause.

50. Number two, or *Duad*, signifies the two-fold reason of diversity and inequality, of everything that is divisible, or mutable, existing at one time in one way, and at another time in another way. After all these methods were not confined to the Pythagoreans, being used by other philosophers to denote unitive powers, which contain all things in the universe, among which are certain reasons of equality, dissimilitude and diversity. These reasons are what they meant by the terms *Monad* and *Duad*, or by the words uniform, biform, or diversiform.

51. The same reasons apply to their use of other numbers, which were ranked according to certain powers. Things that had a beginning, middle and end, they denoted by the number Three, saying that anything that has a middle is triform, which was applied to every perfect thing. They said that if anything was perfect it would make use of this principle and be adorned, according to it; and as they had no other name for it, they invented the form *Triad*; and whenever they tried to bring us to the knowledge of what is perfect they led us to that by the form of this *Triad*. So also with the other numbers, which were ranked according to the same reasons.

52. All other things were comprehended under a single form and power which they called *Decad*, explaining it by a pun as *decad*, meaning comprehension. That is why they called Ten a perfect number, the most perfect of all as comprehending all difference of numbers, reasons, species and proportions. For if the nature of the universe be defined according to the reasons and proportions of members, and if that which is produced, increased and perfected, proceed according to the reason of numbers; and since the *Decad* comprehends every reason of numbers, every proportion, and every species, why should Nature herself not be denoted by the most perfect number, Ten? Such was the use of numbers among the Pythagoreans.

53. This primary philosophy of the Pythagoreans finally died out first, because it was enigmatical, and then because their commentaries were written in Doric, which dialect itself is somewhat obscure, so that Doric teachings were not fully understood, and they became misapprehended, and finally spurious, and later, they who published them no longer were Pythagoreans. The Pythagoreans affirm that Plato, Aristotle, Speusippus, Aristoxenus and Xenocrates; appropriated the best of them, making but minor changes (to distract attention from this their theft), they later collected and delivered as characteristic Pythagorean doctrines whatever therein was most trivial, and vulgar, and whatever had been invented by envious and calumnious persons, to cast contempt on Pythagoreanism.

54. Pythagoras and his associates were long held in such admiration in Italy, that many cities invited them to undertake their administration. At last, however, they incurred envy, and a conspiracy was formed against them as follows. Cylon, a Crotonian, who in race, nobility and wealth was the most preeminent, was of a severe, violent and tyrannical disposition, and did not scruple to use the multitude of his followers to compass his ends. As he esteemed himself worthy of whatever was best, he considered it his right to be admitted to Pythagorean fellowship. He therefore went to Pythagoras extolled himself,

and desired his conversation. Pythagoras, however, who was accustomed to read in human bodies' nature and manners the disposition of the man, bade him depart, and go about his business. Cylon, being of a rough and violent disposition, took it as a great affront, and became furious.

55. He therefore assembled his friends, began to accuse Pythagoras, and conspired against him and his disciples. Pythagoras then went to Delos, to visit the Syrian Pherecydes, formerly his teacher, who was dangerously sick, to nurse him. Pythagoras's friends then gathered together in the house of Milo the wrestler; and were all stoned and burned when Cylon's followers set the house on fire. Only two escaped, Archippus and Lysis, according to the account of Neanthes. Lysis took refuge in Greece, with Epaminondas, whose teacher he had formerly been.

56. But Dicaearchus and other more accurate historians relate that Pythagoras himself was present when this conspiracy bore fruit, for Pherecydes had died before he left Samos. Of his friends, forty who were gathered together in a house were attacked and slain; while others were gradually slain as they came to the city. As his friends were taken, Pythagoras himself first escaped to the Caulonian haven, and thence visited the Locrians. Hearing of his coming, the Locrians sent some old men to their frontiers to intercept him. They said, "Pythagoras, you are wise and of great worth; but as our laws retain nothing reprehensible, we will preserve them intact. Go to some other place, and we will furnish you with any needed necessaries of travel." Pythagoras turned back, and sailed to Tarentum, where, receiving the same treatment as at Crotona, he went to Metapontum. Everywhere arose great mobs against him, of which even now the inhabitants make mention, calling them the Pythagorean riots, as his followers were called Pythagoreans.

57. Pythagoras fled to the temple of the Muses, in Metapontum. There he abode forty days, and starving, died. Others however state that his death was due to grief at the loss of all his friends who, when the house in which they were gathered was burned, in order to make a way for their master, they threw themselves into the flames, to make a bridge of safety for him, whereby indeed he escaped. When died the Pythagoreans, with them also died their knowledge, which till then than they had kept secret, except for a few obscure things which were commonly repeated by those who did not understand them. Pythagoras himself left no book; but some little sparks of his philosophy, obscure and difficult, were preserved by the few who were preserved by being scattered, as were Lysis and Archippus.

58. The Pythagoreans now avoided human society, being lonely, saddened and dispersed. Fearing nevertheless that among men the name of philosophy would be entirely extinguished, and that therefore the Gods would be angry with them, they made abstracts and commentaries. Each man made his own collection of written authorities and his own memories, leaving them wherever he happened to die, charging their wives, sons and daughters to preserve them within their families. This mandate of transmission within each family was obeyed for a long time.

59. Nichomachus says that this was the reason why the Pythagoreans studiously avoided friendship with strangers, preserving a constant friendship among each other. Aristoxenus, in his book on the *Life of Pythagoras*, says he heard many things from Dionysius, the tyrant of Sicily, who, after his abdication, taught letters at Corinth. Among these were that they abstained from lamentations and grieving and tears; also from adulation, entreaty, supplication and the like.

60. It is said that Dionysius at one time wanted to test their mutual fidelity under imprisonment. He contrived this plan. Phintias was arrested, and taken before the tyrant, and charged with plotting against the tyrant, convicted, and condemned to death. Phintias, accepting the situation, asked to be given the rest of the day to arrange his own affairs, and those of Damon, his friend and associate, who now would have to assume the management. He therefore asked for a temporary release, leaving Damon as security for his appearance. Dionysius granted the request, and they sent for Damon, who agreed to remain until Phintias should return.

61. The novelty of this deed astonished Dionysius; but those who had first suggested the experiment,

scoffed at Damon, saying he was in danger of losing his life. But to the general surprise, near sunset Phintias came to die. Dionysius then expressed his admiration, embraced them both, and asked to be received as a third in their friendship. Though he earnestly besought this, they refused this, though assigning no reason therefore. Aristoxenus states he heard this from Dionysius himself. [Hippobotus] and Neanthes relate about Myllia and Timycha.....

Verses Golden and Divine

First honor the immortal Gods, as the law demands;
Then reverence thy oath, and then the illustrious heroes;
Then venerate the divinities under the earth, due rites performing;
Then honor your parents, and all of your kindred.
Among others make the most virtuous thy friend!
Love to make use of his soft speeches, and learn from his deeds that are useful;
But alienate not the beloved comrade for trifling offences,
Bear all you can, what you can, for power is bound to necessity.
Take this well to heart: you must gain control of your habits;
First over stomach, then sleep, and then luxury, and anger.
What brings you shame, do not unto others, nor by yourself.
The highest of duties is honor to self.
Let justice be practiced in words as in deeds;
Then make the habit, never inconsiderately to act;
Neither forget that death is appointed to all;
That possessions here gladly gathered, here must be left;
Whatever sorrow the fate of the Gods may here send us
Bear, whatever may strike you, with patience unmurmuring;
To relieve it, so far as you can, is permitted,
But reflect that not much misfortune has Fate given to the good.
The speech of the people is various, now good, and now evil;
So let them not frighten you, nor keep you from your purpose.
If false calumnies come to your ears, support it in patience;
Yet that which I now am declaring, fulfil it faithfully:
Let no one with speech or with deeds e'er deceive you
To do or to say what is not the best.
Think, before you act, that nothing stupid results;
To act inconsiderately is part of a fool;
Yet whatever later will not bring you repentance, that you should carry through.
Do nothing beyond what you know,
Yet learn what you may need: thus shall your life grow happy.
Do not neglect the health of the body;
Keep measure in eating and drinking, and every exercise of the body.
By measure, I mean what later will not induce pain.
Follow clean habits of life, but not the luxurious;
Avoid all things which will arouse envy.

At the wrong time, never be a prodigal, as if you did not know what was proper,
 Nor show yourself stingy, for a due measure is ever the best.
 Do only those things which will not harm thee, and deliberate before you act.
 Never let slumber approach thy wearied eyelids,
 Ere Thrice you review what this day you did:
 Wherein have I sinned? What did I? What duty is neglected?
 All, from the first to the last, review; and if you have erred grieve in your spirit, rejoicing for
 all that was good.
 With zeal and with industry, this, then, repeat: and learn to repeat it with joy.
 Thus wilt thou tread on the paths of heavenly virtue.
 Surely, I swear it by him who into our souls has transmitted the Sacred Quaternary,
 The spring of eternal Nature.
 Never start on your task until you have implored the blessings of the Gods.
 If this you hold fast, soon will you recognize of Gods and mortal men
 The true nature of existence, how everything passes and returns.
 Then will you see what is true, how Nature in all is most equal,
 So that you hope not for what has no hope, nor that anything should escape you.
 Men shall you find whose sorrows they themselves have created,
 Wretches who see not the Good that is too near, nothing they hear;
 Few know how to help themselves in misfortune.
 That is the Fate that blinds humanity; in circles,
 Hither and yon they run in endless sorrows;
 For they are followed by a grim companion, disunion with themselves;
 Unnoticed, ne'er rouse him, and fly from before him!
 Father Zeus, O free them all from sufferings so great,
 Or show unto each the Genius, who is their guide!
 Yet, do not fear, for the mortals are divine by race,
 To whom holy Nature everything will reveal and demonstrate;
 Whereof if you have received, so keep what I teach you;
 Healing your soul, you shall remain insured from manifold evil.
 Avoid foods forbidden; reflect that this contributes to the cleanliness
 And redemption of your soul. Consider all things well:
 Let reason, the gift divine, be thy highest guide;
 Then should you be separated from the body, and soar in the aether,
 You will be imperishable, a divinity, a mortal no more.

Select Sentences of Sextus

1. To neglect things of the smallest consequence, is not the least thing in human life.
2. The wise man, and the despiser of wealth, resemble God.
3. Do not investigate the name of God, because you will not find it. For every thing which is called by a name, receives its appellation from that which is more worthy than itself, 1 so that it is one person that calls, and another that hears. Who is it, therefore, that has given a name to God? God, however, is not a

name to God, but an indication of what we conceive of Him.

4. God is a light incapable of receiving its contrary, darkness.

5. You have in yourself some thing similar to God, and therefore use yourself as the temple of God, on account of that which in you resembles God.

6. Honour God above all things, that He may rule over you.

7. Whatever you honour above all things, that which you so honour will have dominion over you. But if you give yourself to the domination of God, you will thus have dominion over all things.

8. The greatest honour which can be paid to God, is to know and imitate Him.

9. There is not any thing, indeed, which wholly resembles God; nevertheless the imitation of Him as much as possible by an inferior nature is grateful to Him.

10. God, indeed, is not in want of anything, but the wise man is in want of God alone. He, therefore, who is in want but of few things, and those necessary, emulates him who is in want of nothing.

11. Endeavour to be great in the estimation of Divinity, but among men avoid envy.

12. The wise man whose estimation with men was but small while he was living, will be renowned when he is dead.

13. Consider all the time to be lost to you in which you do not think of divinity.

14. A good intellect is the choir of divinity.

15. A bad intellect is the choir of evil dæmons.

16. Honour that which is just, on this very account that it is just.

17. You will not be concealed from divinity when you act unjustly, nor even when you think of doing so.

18. The foundation of piety is continence; but the summit of piety is the love of God.

19. Wish that what is expedient and not what is pleasing may happen to you.

20. Such as you wish your neighbour to be to you, such also be you to your neighbour.

21. That which God gives you, no one can take away.

22. Neither do nor even think of that which you are not willing God should know.

23. Before you do anything think of God, that his light may precede your energies.

24. The soul is illuminated by the recollection of deity.

25. The use of all animals as food is Indifferent, but it is more rational to abstain from them.

26. God is not the author of any evil.

27. You should not possess more than the use, of the body requires.

28. Possess those things which no one can take from you.

29. Bear that which is necessary, as it is necessary.

30. Ask those things of God which it is worthy of God to bestow.

31. The reason which is in you, is the light of your life.

32. Ask those things of God which you cannot receive from man.
33. Wish that those things which labour ought to precede, may be possessed by you after labour.
34. Be not anxious to please the multitude.
35. It is not proper to despise those things of which we shall be in want after the dissolution of the body.
36. You should not ask of divinity that which, when you have obtained, you will not perpetually possess.
37. Accustom your soul after it has conceived all that is great of divinity, to conceive something great of itself.
38. Esteem nothing so precious, which a bad man may take from you.
39. He is dear to divinity, who considers those things alone to be precious, which are esteemed to be so by divinity.
40. Every thing which is more than necessary to man, is hostile to him.
41. He who loves that which is not expedient, will not love that which is expedient.
42. The intellect of the wise man is always with divinity.
43. God dwells in the intellect of the wise man.
44. Every desire is insatiable, and therefore is always in want.
45. The wise man is always similar to himself.
46. The knowledge and imitation of divinity are alone sufficient to beatitude.
47. Use lying like poison.
48. Nothing is so peculiar to wisdom, as truth.
49. When you preside over men, remember that divinity also presides over you.
50. Be persuaded that the end of life is to live conformably to divinity.
51. Depraved affections are the beginning of sorrows.
52. An evil disposition is the disease of the soul; but injustice and impiety are the death of it.
53. Use all men in such a way, as if you were the common curator of all things after God.
54. He who uses mankind badly, uses himself badly.
55. Wish that you may be able to benefit your enemies.
56. Endure all things, in order that you may live conformably to God.
57. By honouring a wise man, you will honour yourself.
58. In all your actions place God before your eyes.
59. You are permitted to refuse matrimony, in order that you may live incessantly adhering to God. If, however, as one knowing the battle, you are willing to fight, take a wife, and beget children.
60. To live, indeed, is not in our power, but to live rightly is.
61. Be unwilling to admit accusations against the man who is studious of wisdom.

62. If you wish to live with hilarity, be unwilling to do many things. For in a multitude of actions you will be minor.

63. Every cup should be sweet to you which extinguishes thirst.

64. Fly from intoxication as you would from insanity.

65. No good originates from the body.

66. Think that you suffer a great punishment when you obtain the object of corporeal desire; for the attainment of such objects never satisfies desire.

67. Invoke God as a witness to whatever you do.

68. The bad man does not think there is a providence.

69. Assert that which possesses wisdom in you to be the true man.

70. The wise man participates of God.

71. Where that which is wise in you resides, there also is your good.

72. That which is not noxious to the soul, is not noxious to man.

73. He who unjustly expels a wise man from the body, confers a benefit on him by his iniquity. For he thus becomes liberated, as it were, from bones.

74. The fear of death renders a man sad through the ignorance of his soul.

75. You will not possess intellect, till you understand that you have it.

76. Think that your body is the garment of your soul; and therefore preserve it pure.

77. Impure dæmons vindicate to themselves the impure soul.

78. Speak not of God to every man.

79. It is dangerous and the danger is not small, to speak of God even things which are true.

80. A true assertion respecting God is an assertion of God.

81. You should not dare to speak of God to the multitude.

82. He does not know God who does not worship Him.

83. The man who is worthy of God is also a God among men.

84. It is better to have nothing, than to possess much and impart it to no one.

85. He who thinks that there is a God, and that nothing is taken care of by him, differs in no respect from him who does not believe that there is a God.

86. He honours God in the best manner who renders his intellect as much as possible similar to God.

87. If you injure no one, you will fear no one.

88. No one is wise who looks downward to the earth.

89. To lie is to deceive in life, and to be deceived.

90. Recognise what God is, and what that is in you which recognises God.

91. It is not death, but a bad life, that destroys the soul.

92. If you know him by whom you were made, you will know yourself.
93. It is not possible for a man to live conformable to divinity, unless he acts modestly, well, and justly.
94. Divine Wisdom is true Science.
95. You should not dare to speak of God to an impure soul.
96. The wise man follows God, and God follows the soul of the wise man.
97. A king rejoices in those whom he governs, and therefore God rejoices in the wise man. He who governs likewise, is inseparable from those whom he governs; and therefore God is inseparable from the soul of the wise man, which he defends and governs.
98. The wise man is governed by God and on this account is blessed.
99. A scientific knowledge of God causes a man to use few words.
100. To use many words when speaking of God, produces an ignorance of God.
101. The man who possesses a knowledge of God, will not be very ambitious.
102. The erudite, chaste, and wise soul, is the prophet of the truth of God.
103. Accustom yourself always to look to Divinity.
104. A wise intellect is the mirror of God.

The Golden Sentences of Democrates

1. If anyone will give his mind to these sentences, he will obtain many things worthy of a man, and be free from many things that are base.
2. The perfection of the soul will correct the depravity of the body; but the strength of the body without reasoning does not render the soul better.
3. He who loves the goods of the soul will love things more, divine; but he who loves the goods of its transient habitation will love things human.
4. It is beautiful to impede an unjust man; but, if this be not possible, it is beautiful not to act in conjunction with him.
5. It is necessary to be good, rather than to appear so.
6. The felicity of a man does not consist either in body or in riches, but in upright conduct and justice.
7. Sin should be abstained from, not through fear, but for the sake of the becoming.
8. It is a great thing to be wise where we ought in calamitous circumstances.
9. Repentance after base actions is the salvation of life.
10. It is necessary to be a speaker of the truth, and not to be loquacious.
11. He who does an injury is more unhappy than he who receives one.

12. It is the province of a magnanimous man to bear with mildness the errors of others.
13. It is comely not to oppose the law, nor a prince, nor one wiser than yourself.
14. A good man pays no attention to the reproofs of the depraved.
15. It is hard to be governed by these who are worse than ourselves.
16. He who is perfectly vanquished by riches, can never be just.
17. Reason is frequently more persuasive than gold itself.
18. He who admonishes a man that fancies he has intellect, labours in vain.
19. Many who have not learnt to argue rationally, still live according to reason.
20. Many who commit the basest actions often exercise the best discourse.
21. Fools frequently become wise under the pressure of misfortunes.
22. It is necessary to emulate the works and actions, and not the words of virtue.
23. Those who are naturally well disposed, know things beautiful, and are themselves emulous of them.
24. Vigour and strength of body are the nobility of cattle; but the rectitude of manners is the nobility of man.
25. Neither art nor wisdom can be acquired without preparatory learning.
26. It is better to reprove your own errors, than those of others.
27. Those whose manners are well ordered will also be orderly in their lives.
28. It is good not only to refrain from doing an injury, but even from the very wish.
29. It is proper to speak well of good works; for to do so of such as are base is the property of a fraudulent man and an impostor.
30. Many that have great learning have no intellect.
31. It is necessary to endeavour to obtain an abundance of intellect, and not pursue an abundance of erudition.
32. It is better that counsel should precede actions, than that repentance should follow them.
33. Put not confidence in all men, but in those that are worthy; for to do the former is the province of a stupid man, but the latter of a wise man.
34. A worthy and an unworthy man are to be judged not from their actions only, but also from their will.
35. To desire immoderately is the province of a boy, and not of a man.
36. Unseasonable pleasures bring forth pains.
37. Vehement desires about any one thing render the soul blind with respect to other things.
38. The love is just which, unattended with injury, aspires after things becoming.
39. Admit nothing as pleasant which is not advantageous.
40. It is better to be governed by, than to govern, the stupid.

41. Not argument but calamity is the preceptor to children.
42. Glory and wealth without wisdom are not secure possessions.
43. It is not indeed useless to procure wealth, but to procure it from injustice is the most pernicious of all things.
44. It is a dreadful thing to imitate the bad, and to be unwilling to imitate the good.
45. It is a shameful thing for a man to be employed about the affairs of others, but to be ignorant of his own.
46. To be always intending to act renders action imperfect.
47. Fraudulent men, and such as are only seemingly good, do all things in words and nothing in deeds.
48. He is a blessed man who has both property and intellect, for he will use them well in such things as are proper.
49. The ignorance of what is excellent is the cause of error.
50. Prior to the performance of base things, a man should reverence himself.
51. A man given to contradiction, and very attentive to trifles, is naturally unadapted to learn what is proper.
52. Continually to speak without being willing to hear, is arrogance.
53. It is necessary to guard against a depraved man, lest he should take advantage of opportunity.
54. An envious man is the cause of molestation to himself, as to an enemy.
55. Not only he is an enemy who acts unjustly, but even he who deliberates about so acting.
56. The enmity of relations is far more bitter than that of strangers.
57. Conduct yourself to all men without suspicion; and be accommodating and cautious in your behaviour.
58. It is proper to receive favours, at the same time determining that the retribution shall surpass the gift.
59. When about to bestow a favour, previously consider him who is to receive it, lest being a fraudulent character he should return evil for good.
60. Small favours seasonably bestowed, become things of the greatest consequence to those who receive them.
61. Honours with wise men are capable of effecting the greatest things, if at the same time they understand that they are honoured.
62. The beneficent man is one who does not look to retribution, but who deliberately intends to do well.
63. Many that appear to be friends are not, and others, who do not appear to be friends, are so.
64. The friendship of one wise man is better than that of every fool,
65. He is unworthy to live who has not one worthy friend.

66. Many turn from their friends, if, from affluence, they fall into adversity.
67. The equal is beautiful in everything; but excess and defect to me do not appear to be so.
68. He who loves no one does not appear to me to be loved by any one.
69. He is an agreeable old man who is facetious, and abounds in interesting anecdote.
70. The beauty of the body is merely animal unless supported by intellect.
71. To find a friend in prosperity, is very easy; but in adversity, it is the most difficult of all things.
72. Not all relations are friends, but those who accord with what is mutually advantageous.
73. Since we are men, it is becoming, not to deride, but bewail, the calamities of men.
74. Good scarcely presents itself, even to those who investigate it; but evil is obvious without investigation.
75. Men who delight to blame others are not naturally adapted to friendship.
76. A woman should not be given to loquacity; for it is a dreadful thing.
77. To be governed by a woman is the extremity of insolence and unmanliness.
78. It is the property of a divine intellect to be always intently thinking about the beautiful.
79. He who believes that Divinity beholds all things, will not sin either secretly or openly.
80. Those who praise the unwise do them a great injury.
81. It is better to be praised by another than by oneself.
82. If you cannot reconcile to yourself the praises you receive, think that you are flattered.
83. The world is a scene; life is a transition. You came, you saw, you departed.
84. The world is a mutation: life a vain opinion.

The Sentences of Demophilus

1. Request not of Divinity such things as, when obtained, you cannot preserve; for no gift of Divinity can ever be taken away; and on this account he does not confer that which you are unable to retain.
2. Be vigilant in your intellectual part; for sleep about this has an affinity with real death.
3. Divinity sends evil to men, not as being influenced by anger, but for the sake of purification; for anger is foreign from Divinity, since it arises from circumstances taking place contrary to the will; but nothing contrary to the will can happen to a god.
4. When you deliberate whether or not you shall injure another, you will previously suffer the evil yourself which you intend to commit. But neither must you expect any good from the evil; for the manners of everyone are correspondent to his life and actions. Every soul too is a repository, that which is good, of things good, that which is evil, of things depraved.
5. After long consultation, engage either in speaking or acting; for you have not the ability to recall

either your words or deeds.

6. Divinity does not principally esteem the tongue, but the deeds of the wise; for a wise man, even when he is silent, honours Divinity.

7. A loquacious and ignorant man both in prayer and sacrifice contaminates a divine nature. The wise man therefore is alone a priest, is alone a friend of Divinity and only knows how to pray.

8. The wise man being sent hither naked, should naked invoke him by whom he was sent; for he alone is heard by Divinity, who is not burdened with foreign concerns.

9. It is impossible to receive from Divinity any gift greater than virtue.¹

10. Gifts and victims confer no honour on Divinity, nor is he adorned with offerings suspended in temples; but a soul divinely inspired solidly conjoins us with Divinity; for it is necessary that like should approach to like.

11. It is more painful to be subservient to passions than to tyrants.

12. It is better to converse more with yourself than others.

13. If you are always careful to remember that in whatever place either your soul or body accomplishes any deed, Divinity is present as an inspector of your conduct; in all your words and actions you will venerate the presence of an inspector from whom nothing can be concealed, and will, at the same time, possess Divinity as an intimate associate.

14. Believe that you are furious and insane in proportion as you are ignorant of yourself.

15. It is necessary to search for those wives and children which will remain after a liberation from the present life.

16. The self-sufficient and needy philosopher lives a life truly similar to Divinity, and considers the non-possession of external and unnecessary goods as the greatest wealth. For the acquisition of riches sometimes inflames desire; but not to act in any respect unjustly is sufficient to the enjoyment of a blessed life.

17. True goods are never produced by indolent habits.

18. Esteem that to be eminently good, which, communicated to another, will be increased to yourself.²

19. Esteem those to be eminently your friends, who assist your soul rather than your body.

20. Consider both the praise and reproach of every foolish person as ridiculous, and the whole life of an ignorant man as a disgrace.

21. Endeavour that your familiars may reverence rather than fear you; for love attends upon reverence, but hatred upon fear.

22. The sacrifices of fools are the aliment of the fire; but the offerings which they suspend in temples are the supplies of the sacrilegious.

23. Understand that no dissimulation can be long concealed.

24. The unjust man suffers greater evil while his soul is tormented with a consciousness of guilt, than when his body is scourged with whips.

¹ Because virtue is the perfection of life, and the proper perfection of any being is the felicity of that being.

² And this is the case with intellectual good.

25. It is by no means safe to discourse concerning Divinity with men of false opinions; for the danger is equally great in speaking to such as these, things either fallacious or true.

26. By everywhere using reason as your guide, you will avoid the commission of crimes.

27. By being troublesome to others, you will not easily escape molestation yourself.

28. Consider that as great erudition, through which you are able to bear the want of erudition, in the ignorant.

29. He who is depraved does not listen to the divine law, and on this account lives without law.

30. A just man who is a stranger, is not only superior to a citizen, but is even more excellent than a relation.

31. As many passions of the soul, so many fierce and savage despots.

32. No one is free who has not obtained the empire of himself.

33. Labour, together with continence, precedes the acquisition of every good.

34. Be persuaded that those things are not your riches which you do not possess in the penetralia of the reasoning powers.

35. Do that which you judge to be beautiful and honest, though you should acquire no glory from the performance; for the vulgar is a depraved judge of beautiful deeds.

36. Make trial of a man rather from his deeds than his discourses; for many live badly and speak well.

37. Perform great things, at the same time promising nothing great.

38. Since the roots of our nature are established in Divinity, from which also we are produced, we should tenaciously adhere to our root; for streams also of water, and other offspring of the earth, when their roots are cut off, become rotten and dry.

39. The strength of the soul is temperance; for this is the light of a soul destitute of passions; but it is much better to die than to darken the soul through the intemperance of the body.

40. You cannot easily denominate that man happy who depends either on his friends or children, or on any fleeting and fallen nature; for all these are unstable and uncertain; but to depend on oneself and on Divinity is alone stable and firm.

41. He is a wise man, and beloved of Divinity, who studies how to labour for the good of his soul, as much as others labour for the sake of the body.

42. Yield all things to their kindred and ruling nature except liberty.

43. Learn how to produce eternal children, not such as may supply the wants of the body in old age, but such as may nourish the soul with perpetual food.

44. It is impossible that the same person can be *a lover of pleasure, a lover of body, a lover of riches, and a lover of Divinity*. For a lover of pleasure is also a lover of body; but a lover of body is entirely a lover of riches; a lover of riches is necessarily unjust; and the unjust is necessarily profane towards Divinity, and lawless with respect to men. Hence, though he should sacrifice hecatombs, he is only by this means the more impious, unholy, atheistical, and sacrilegious, with respect to his intentions: and on this account it is necessary to avoid every lover of pleasure as an atheist and polluted person.

45. The Divinity has not a place in the earth more allied to his nature than a pure and holy soul.

The Similitudes of Demophilus

1. Flattery is like painted armour, because it affords delight, but is of no use.
2. Learning is similar to a golden crown; for it is both honourable and advantageous.
3. Flighty men, like empty vessels, are easily laid hold of by the ears.³
4. Life, like a musical instrument, being harmonized by remission and intention, becomes more agreeable.
5. Reason, like a good potter, introduces a beautiful form to the soul.
6. The intellect of wise men, like gold, possesses the greatest weight.
7. Boasting, like gilt armour, is not the same within as without.
8. Reason has the same power as an ointment, for it benefits us when we are disordered, but delights us when well.
9. Of a bad man, as of a bad dog, the silence is more to be dreaded than the voice.
10. It is neither becoming to prefer a mistress to a wife; nor flattery to a friend.
11. Garrulous men, like magpies, by their continued loquacity destroy the pleasures of conversation.
12. The Furies pursue the sins of bad men who are impious, and those also of the stupid and daring, when they grow old.
13. It is necessary that a well-educated man should depart from life elegantly, as from a banquet.
14. A port is a place of rest to a ship, but friendship, to life.
15. The reproof of a father is a pleasant medicine; for it is more advantageous than severe chastisements.
16. It is necessary that a worthy man, like a good wrestler, should oppose his weight to fortune, when acting the part of an antagonist.
17. The possession of self-sufficiency,⁴ like a short and pleasant road, has much grace and but little labour.
18. Restive horses are led by the bridle, but irritable minds, by reasoning.
19. Tests, like salt, should be used sparingly.
20. Both a well-adapted shoe, and a well-harmonized life, are accompanied with but little pain.
21. Garments reaching to the feet impede the body⁵; and immoderate riches, the soul.
22. To those who run in the stadium, the reward of victory is in the end of the race; but to those who delight to labour in wisdom, the reward is in old age.

³ The handle of a vessel was called an ear by the Greeks.

⁴ Self-sufficiency must not be considered in the vulgar sense, as consummate arrogance; but as the internal possession of everything requisite to felicity.

⁵ Long garments or robes, both by ancients and moderns, have always been worn as marks of distinction; consequently, like riches, they are among the objects of desire; and although not so extensively pernicious, yet the philosopher very properly places them among things that are by no means free from danger; and which are neither to be embraced by everyone, nor without the greatest caution.

23. It is necessary that he who hastens to behold virtue as his country, should pass by pleasures, as he would by the sirens.

24. As those who sail in fair weather are wont to have things prepared against a storm, so also those who are wise in prosperity, should prepare things necessary for their assistance against adversity.

25. Garments that are made clean and bright become soiled again by use; but the soul being once purified from ignorance, remains splendid forever.

26. Fugitive slaves, although they are not pursued, are affrighted; but the unwise suffer perturbation, although they have not yet acted badly.

27. The wealth of the avaricious, like the sun when it has descended under the earth, delights no living thing.

28. The fruits of the earth spring up once a year; but the fruits of friendship at all times.

29. It is the business of a musician to harmonize every instrument; but of a well-educated man to adapt himself harmoniously to every fortune.

30. Neither the blows of a sick man, nor the threats of a stupid one, are to be feared.

31. It is necessary to provide an inward garment for the protection of the breast, and intellect as a protection against pain.

32. The diet of the sick, and the soul of the unwise, are full of fastidiousness.

33. Untaught boys confound letters, but uneducated men, things.

34. The intellect derived from philosophy is similar to a charioteer; for it is present with our desires, and always conducts them to the beautiful.

35. Time, indeed, will render the herb absinthium sweeter than honey, but circumstances may sometimes make an enemy preferable to a friend.

36. A good pilot sometimes suffers shipwreck, and a worthy man is sometimes unfortunate.

37. Thunder especially frightens children; but threats, the unwise.

38. Figure adorns a statue; but actions adorn a man,

39. It is the same thing to drink a deadly medicine from a golden cup, and to receive counsel from an injudicious friend.

40. Swallows signify fair weather; but the discourses of philosophy, exemption from pain.

41. Orphan children have not so much need of guardians as stupid men.

42. Fortune is like a depraved rewarder of contests; for she frequently crowns him who accomplishes nothing.

43. There is need of a pilot and a wind for a prosperous navigation; but of reasoning and fortune, to effect a happy life.

44. A timid man bears armour against himself; and a fool employs riches for the same purpose.

45. It is the same thing to moor a boat by an infirm anchor, and to place hope in a depraved mind.

46. Clouds frequently obscure the sun; but the passions, the reasoning power.

47. Neither does a golden bed benefit a sick man; nor a splendid fortune, a stupid man.

48. Pure water dissolves inflammation; but mild discourse dissolves anger.
49. Austere wine is not adapted for copious drinking, nor rustic manners for conversation.
50. The anger of an ape, and the threats of a flatterer, are to be alike regarded.
51. Of life, the first part is childhood, on which account all men are attentive to it, as to the first part of a drama.
52. It is necessary that we should be cautious in our writings, but splendid in our actions.
53. As in plants, so also in youth, the first blossoms indicate the fruit of virtue.
54. In banquets, he who is not intoxicated with wine is the more pleasant; but in prosperity, he who does not conduct himself illegally.
55. It is the same thing to nourish a serpent, and to benefit a depraved man; for gratitude is produced from neither.
56. It is rare to suffer shipwreck in fair weather; and equally so not to suffer shipwreck from want of counsel.
57. Wind inflates empty bladders; but false opinions puff up stupid men.
58. It is necessary that he who exercises himself should avoid fatigue, and he who is prosperous, envy.
59. "Measure is most excellent," says one of the wise men; to which also we being in like manner persuaded, O most friendly and pious Asclepiades, here finish the curations of life.

Pythagorean Ethical Sentences from Stobaeus

1. Do not even think of doing what ought not to be done.
2. Choose rather to be strong in soul than in body.
3. Be persuaded that things of a laborious nature contribute more than pleasures to virtue.
4. Every passion of the soul is most hostile to its salvation.
5. It is difficult to walk at one and the same time many paths of life.
6. Pythagoras said, it is requisite to choose the most excellent life; for custom will make it pleasant. Wealth is an infirm anchor, glory is still more infirm; and in a similar manner, the body, dominion, and honour. For all these are imbecile and powerless. What then are powerful anchors. Prudence, magnanimity, fortitude. These no tempest can shake. This is the Law of God, that virtue is the only thing that is strong; and that every thing else is a trifle.
7. All the parts of human life, in the same manner as those of a statue, ought to be beautiful.
8. Frankincense ought to be given to the Gods, but praise to good men.
9. It is requisite to defend those who are unjustly accused of having acted injuriously, but to praise those who excel in a certain good.
10. Neither will the horse be adjudged to be generous, that is sumptuously adorned, but the horse whose nature is illustrious; nor is the man worthy who possesses great wealth, but he whose soul is

generous.

11. When the wise man opens his mouth, the beauties of his soul present themselves to the view, like the statues in a temple

12. Remind yourself that all men assert that wisdom is the greatest good, but that there are few who strenuously endeavour to obtain this greatest good.

13. Be sober, and remember to be disposed to believe; for these are the nerves of wisdom.

14. It is better to live lying on the grass, confiding in Divinity and yourself, than to lie on a golden bed with perturbation.

15. You will not be in want of anything, which it is in the power of fortune to give and take away.

16. Despise all those things which when liberated from the body you will not want; invoke the Gods to become your helpers.

17. Neither is it possible to conceal fire in a garment, nor a base deviation from rectitude in time.

18. Wind indeed increases fire, but custom love.

19. Those alone are dear to Divinity who are hostile to injustice.

20. Those things which the body necessarily requires, are easily to be procured by all men, without labour and molestation; but those things to the attainment of which labour and molestation are requisite, are objects of desire, not to the body, but to depraved opinion.

21. Of desire also, he (Pythagoras) said as follows:—This passion is various, laborious, and very multiform. Of desires, however, some are acquired and adventitious, but others are connascent. But he defined desire itself to be a certain tendency and impulse of the soul, and an appetite of a plentitude or presence of sense, or an emptiness and absence of it, and of non-perception. He also said, that there are three most known species of erroneous and depraved desire, *viz.*, the indecorous, the incommensurate, and the unseasonable. For desire is either immediately Indecorous, troublesome, and illiberal, or it is not absolutely so, but is more vehement and lasting than is fit. Or in the third place, it is impelled when it is not proper, and to objects to which it ought not to tend.

22. Endeavour not to conceal your errors by words, but to remedy them by reproof.

23. It is not so difficult to err, as not to reprove him who errs.

24. As a bodily disease cannot be healed, if it be concealed, or praised, thus also, neither can a remedy be applied to a diseased soul, which is badly guarded and protected.

25. The grace of freedom of speech, like beauty in season, is productive of greater delight.

26. It is not proper either to have a blunt sword or to use freedom of speech ineffectually.

27. Neither is the sun to be taken from the world nor freedom of speech from erudition.

28. As it is possible for one who is clothed with a sordid robe, to have a good habit of body; thus also he whose life is poor may possess freedom of speech.

29. Be rather delighted with those that reprove, than with those that flatter you; but avoid flatterers, as worse than enemies.

30. The life of the avaricious resembles a funeral banquet. For though it has all things requisite to a feast, yet no one present rejoices.

31. Acquire continence as the greatest strength and wealth.
32. "Not frequently man from man," is one of the exhortations of Pythagoras; by which he obscurely signifies, that it is not proper to be frequently engaged in venereal connexions.
33. It is impossible that he can be free who is a slave to his passions.
34. Pythagoras said, that intoxication is the meditation of insanity.
35. Pythagoras being asked, how a lover of wine might be cured of intoxication, answered, if he frequently surveys what his actions were when he was intoxicated.
36. Pythagoras said, that it was requisite either to be silent, or to say something better than silence.
37. Let it be more eligible to you to throw a stone in vain, than to utter an idle word.
38. Do not say a few things in many words, but much in a few words.
39. Genius is to men either a good or an evil dæmon.
40. Pythagoras being asked how a man ought to conduct himself towards his country, when it had acted iniquitously with respect to him, replied, as to a mother.
41. Travelling teaches a man frugality, and the way in which he may be sufficient to himself. For bread made of milk and flour, and a bed of grass, are the sweetest remedies of hunger and labour.
42. To the wise man every land is eligible as a place of residence; for the whole world is the country of the worthy soul.
43. Pythagoras said that luxury entered into cities in the first place, afterwards satiety, then lascivious insolence, and after all these, destruction.
44. Pythagoras said, that of cities that was the best which contained most worthy men.
45. Do those things which you judge to be beautiful, though in doing them you should be without renown. For the rabble is a bad judge of a good thing. Despise, therefore, the reprehension of those whose praise you despise.
46. Those that do not punish bad men, wish that good men may be injured.
47. It is not possible for a horse to be governed without bridle, nor riches without prudence.
48. It is the same thing to think greatly of yourself in prosperity, as to contend in the race in a slippery road.
49. There is not any gate of wealth so secure, which the opportunity of fortune may not open.
50. Expel by reasoning the unrestrained grief of a torpid soul.
51. It is the province of the wise man to bear poverty with equanimity.
52. Spare your life, lest you consume it with sorrow and care.
53. Nor will I be silent as to this particular, that it appeared both to Plato and Pythagoras, that old age was not to be considered with reference to an egress from the present life, but to the beginning of a blessed life.
54. The ancient theologians and priests testify that the soul is conjoined to the body through a certain punishment, and, that it is buried in this body as in a sepulchre.
55. Whatever we see when awake is death; and when asleep, a dream.