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| **I** | |
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| 1. FROM my grandfather Verus [I learned] good morals and the government of my temper. | *1* |
| 2. From the reputation and remembrance of my father, modesty and a manly character. | *2* |
| 3. From my mother, piety and beneficence, and abstinence, not only from evil deeds, but even from evil thoughts; and further simplicity in my way of living, far removed from the habits of the rich. | *3* |
| 4. From my great-grandfather, not to have frequented public schools, and to have had good teachers at home, and to know that on such things a man should spend liberally. | *4* |
| 5. From my governor, to be neither of the green nor of the blue party at the games in the Circus, nor a partizan either of the Parmularius or the Scutarius at the gladiators’ fights; from him too I learned endurance of labour, and to want little, and to work with my own hands, and not to meddle with other people’s affairs, and not to be ready to listen to slander. | *5* |
| 6. From Diognetus, not to busy myself about trifling things, and not to give credit to what was said by miracle-workers and jugglers about incantations and the driving away of daemons and such things; and not to breed quails [for fighting], nor to give myself up passionately to such things; and to endure freedom of speech; and to have become intimate with philosophy; and to have been a hearer, first of Bacchius, then of Tandasis and Marcianus; and to have written dialogues in my youth; and to have desired a plank bed and skin, and whatever else of the kind belongs to the Grecian discipline. | *6* |
| 7. From Rusticus I received the impression that my character required improvement and discipline; and from him I learned not to be led astray to sophistic emulation, nor to writing on speculative matters, nor to delivering little hortatory orations, nor to showing myself off as a man who practises much discipline, or does benevolent acts in order to make a display; and to abstain from rhetoric, and poetry, and fine writing; and not to walk about in the house in my outdoor dress, nor to do other things of the kind; and to write my letters with simplicity, like the letter which Rusticus wrote from Sinuessa to my mother; and with respect to those who have offended me by words, or done me wrong, to be easily disposed to be pacified and reconciled, as soon as they have shown a readiness to be reconciled, and to read carefully, and not to be satisfied with a superficial understanding of a book; nor hastily to give my assent to those who talk overmuch; and I am indebted to him for being acquainted with the discourses of Epictetus, which he communicated to me out of his own collection. | *7* |
| 8. From Apollonius I learned freedom of will and undeviating steadiness of purpose; and to look to nothing else, not even for a moment, except to reason; and to be always the same in sharp pains, on the occasion of the loss of a child, and in long illness; and to see clearly in a living example that the same man can be both most resolute and yielding, and not peevish in giving his instruction; and to have had before my eyes a man who clearly considered his experience and his skill in expounding philosophical principles as the smallest of his merits; and from him I learned how to receive from friends what are esteemed favours, without being either humbled by them or letting them pass unnoticed. | *8* |
| 9. From Sextus, a benevolent disposition, and the example of a family governed in a fatherly manner, and the idea of living conformably to nature; and gravity without affectation, and to look carefully after the interests of friends, and to tolerate ignorant persons, and those who form opinions without consideration: he had the power of readily accommodating himself to all, so that intercourse with him was more agreeable than any flattery; and at the same time he was most highly venerated by those who associated with him; and he had the faculty both of discovering and ordering, in an intelligent and methodical way, the principles necessary for life; and he never showed anger or any other passion, but was entirely free from passion, and also most affectionate; and he could express approbation without noisy display, and he possessed much knowledge without ostentation. | *9* |
| 10. From Alexander, the grammarian, to refrain from fault-finding, and not in a reproachful way to chide those who uttered any barbarous or solecistic or strange-sounding expression; but dexterously to introduce the very expression which ought to have been used, and in the way of answer or giving confirmation, or joining in an inquiry about the thing itself, not about the word, or by some other fit suggestion. | *10* |
| 11. From Fronto I learned to observe what envy and duplicity and hypocrisy are in a tyrant, and that generally those among us who are called Patricians are rather deficient in paternal affection. | *11* |
| 12. From Alexander the Platonic, not frequently nor without necessity to say to any one, or to write in a letter, that I have no leisure; nor continually to excuse the neglect of duties required by our relation to those with whom we live, by alleging urgent occupations. | *12* |
| 13. From Catulus, not to be indifferent when a friend finds fault, even if he should find fault without reason, but to try to restore him to his usual disposition; and to be ready to speak well of teachers, as it is reported of Domitius and Athenodotus; and to love my children truly. | *13* |
| 14. From my brother Severus, to love my kin, and to love truth, and to love justice; and through him I learned to know Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dion, Brutus; and from him I received the idea of a polity in which there is the same law for all, a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech, and the idea of a kingly government which respects most of all the freedom of the governed; I learned from him also consistency and undeviating steadiness in my regard for philosophy, and a disposition to do good, and to give to others readily, and to cherish good hopes, and to believe that I am loved by my friends; and in him I observed no concealment of his opinions with respect to those whom he condemned, and that his friends had no need to conjecture what he wished or did not wish, but it was quite plain. | *14* |
| 15. From Maximus I learned self-government, and not to be led aside by anything; and cheerfulness in all circumstances, as well as in illness; and a just admixture in the moral character of sweetness and dignity, and to do what was set before me without complaining. I observed that everybody believed that he thought as he spoke, and that in all that he did he never had any bad intention; and he never showed amazement and surprise, and was never in a hurry, and never put off doing a thing, nor was perplexed nor dejected, nor did he ever laugh to disguise his vexation, nor, on the other hand, was he ever passionate or suspicious. He was accustomed to do acts of beneficence and was ready to forgive, and was free from all falsehood; and he presented the appearance of a man who could not be diverted from right rather than of a man who had been improved. I observed, too, that no man could ever think that he was despised by Maximus, or ever venture to think himself a better man. He had also the art of being humorous in an agreeable way. | *15* |

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| **Excerpts from the ‘Meditations’** |
| By Marcus Aurelius (121–180) |

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| (See [full text](https://www.bartleby.com/2/3/).)  The Brotherhood of Man |

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| BEGIN thy morning with these thoughts: I shall meet the meddler, the ingrate, the scorner, the hypocrite, the envious man, the cynic. These men are such because they know not to discern the difference between good and evil. But I know that Goodness is Beauty and that Evil is Loathsomeness: I know that the real nature of the evil-doer is akin to mine, not only physically but in a unity of intelligence and in participation in the Divine Nature. Therefore I know that I cannot be harmed by such persons, nor can they thrust upon me what is base. I know, too, that I should not be angry with my kinsmen nor hate them, because we are all made to work together fitly like the feet, the hands, the eyelids, the rows of the upper and the lower teeth. To be at strife one with another is therefore contrary to our real nature; and to be angry with one another, to despise one another, *is* to be at strife one with another. (Book ii., § 1.) | *1* |
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| Fashion thyself to the circumstances of thy lot. The men whom Fate hath made thy comrades here, love; and love them in sincerity and in truth. (Book vi., § 39.) | *2* |
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| This is distinctive of men,—to love those who do wrong. And this thou shalt do if thou forget not that they are thy kinsmen, and that they do wrong through ignorance and not through design; that ere long thou and they will be dead; and more than all, that the evil-doer hath really done thee no evil, since he hath left thy conscience unharmed. (Book viii., § 22.) | *3* |
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| The Supreme Nobility of Duty  AS a Roman and as a man, strive steadfastly every moment to do thy duty, with dignity, sincerity, and loving-kindness, freely and justly, and freed from all disquieting thought concerning any other thing. And from such thought thou wilt be free if every act be done as though it were thy last, putting away from thee slothfulness, all loathing to do what Reason bids thee, all dissimulation, selfishness, and discontent with thine appointed lot. Behold, then, how few are the things needful for a life which will flow onward like a quiet stream, blessed even as the life of the gods. For he who so lives, fulfills their will. (Book ii., § 5.) | *4* |
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| So long as thou art doing thy duty, heed not warmth nor cold, drowsiness nor wakefulness, life, nor impending death; nay, even in the very act of death, which is indeed only one of the acts of life, it suffices to do well what then remains to be done. (Book vi., § 2.) | *5* |
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| I strive to do my duty; to all other considerations I am indifferent, whether they be material things or unreasoning and ignorant people. (Book vi., § 22.) | *6* |
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| The Future Life. Immortality  THIS very moment thou mayest die. Think, act, as if this were now to befall thee. Yet fear not death. If there are gods they will do thee no evil. If there are not gods, or if they care not for the welfare of men, why should I care to live in a Universe that is devoid of Divine beings or of any providential care? But, verily, there are Divine beings, and they do concern themselves with the welfare of men; and they have given unto him all power not to fall into any real evil. If, indeed, what men call misfortunes were really evils, then from these things also, man would have been given the power to free himself. But—thou sayest—are not death, dishonor, pain, really evils? Reflect that if they were, it is incredible that the Ruler of the Universe has, through ignorance, overlooked these things, or has not had the power or the skill to prevent them; and that thereby what is real evil befalls good and bad alike. For true it is that life and death, honor and dishonor, pain and pleasure, come impartially to the good and to the bad. But none of these things can affect our lives if they do not affect our true selves. Now our real selves they do not affect either for better or for worse; and therefore such things are not really good or evil. (Book ii., § 11.) | *7* |
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| If our spirits live, how does Space suffice for all during all the ages? Well, how does the earth contain the bodies of those who have been buried therein during all the ages? In the latter case, the decomposition and—after a certain period—the dispersion of the bodies already buried, affords room for other bodies; so, in the former case, the souls which pass into Space, after a certain period are purged of their grosser elements and become ethereal, and glow with the glory of flame as they meet and mingle with the Creative Energy of the world. And thereby there is room for other souls which in their turn pass into Space. This, then, is the explanation that may be given, if souls continue to exist at all. | *8* |
| Moreover, in thinking of all the bodies which the earth contains, we must have in mind not only the bodies which are buried therein, but also the vast number of animals which are the daily food of ourselves and also of the entire animal creation itself. Yet these, too, Space contains; for on the one hand they are changed into blood which becomes part of the bodies that are buried in the earth, and on the other hand these are changed into the ultimate elements of fire or air. (Book iv., § 21.) | *9* |
| I am spirit and body: neither will pass into nothingness, since neither came therefrom; and therefore every part of me, though changed in form, will continue to be a part of the Universe, and that part will change into another part, and so on through all the ages. And therefore, through such changes I myself exist; and, in like manner, those who preceded me and those who will follow me will exist forever,—a conclusion equally true though the Universe itself be dissipated at prescribed cycles of time. (Book v., § 13.) | *10* |
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| How can it be that the gods, who have clothed the Universe with such beauty and ordered all things with such loving-kindness for the welfare of man, have neglected this alone, that the best men—the men who walked as it were with the Divine Being, and who, by their acts of righteousness and by their reverent service, dwelt ever in his presence—should never live again when once they have died? If this be really true, then be satisfied that it is best that it should be so, else it would have been otherwise ordained. For whatever is right and just is possible; and therefore, if it were in accord with the will of the Divine Being that we should live after death—so it would have been. But because it is otherwise,—if indeed it be otherwise,—rest thou satisfied that this also is just and right. | *11* |
| Moreover, is it not manifest to thee that in inquiring so curiously concerning these things, thou art questioning God himself as to what is right, and that this thou wouldst not do didst thou not believe in his supreme goodness and wisdom? Therefore, since in these we believe, we may also believe that in the government of the Universe nothing that is right and just has been overlooked or forgotten. (Book xii., § 5.) | *12* |
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| The Universal Beauty of the World  TO him who hath a true insight into the real nature of the Universe, every change in everything therein that is a part thereof seems appropriate and delightful. The bread that is over-baked so that it cracks and bursts asunder hath not the form desired by the baker; yet none the less it hath a beauty of its own, and is most tempting to the palate. Figs bursting in their ripeness, olives near even unto decay, have yet in their broken ripeness a distinctive beauty. Shocks of corn bending down in their fullness, the lion’s mane, the wild boar’s mouth all flecked with foam, and many other things of the same kind, though perhaps not pleasing in and of themselves, yet as necessary parts of the Universe created by the Divine Being they add to the beauty of the Universe, and inspire a feeling of pleasure. So that if a man hath appreciation of and an insight into the purpose of the Universe, there is scarcely a portion thereof that will not to him in a sense seem adapted to give delight. In this sense the open jaws of wild beasts will appear no less pleasing than their prototypes in the realm of art. Even in old men and women he will be able to perceive a distinctive maturity and seemliness, while the winsome bloom of youth he can contemplate with eyes free from lascivious desire. And in like manner it will be with very many things which to every one may not seem pleasing, but which will certainly rejoice the man who is a true student of Nature and her works. (Book iii., § 2.) | *13* |
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| The Good Man  IN the mind of him who is pure and good will be found neither corruption nor defilement nor any malignant taint. Unlike the actor who leaves the stage before his part is played, the life of such a man is complete whenever death may come. He is neither cowardly nor presuming; not enslaved to life nor indifferent to its duties; and in him is found nothing worthy of condemnation nor that which putteth to shame. (Book iii., § 8.) | *14* |
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| Test by a trial how excellent is the life of the good man;—the man who rejoices at the portion given him in the universal lot and abides therein, content; just in all his ways and kindly minded toward all men. (Book iv., § 25.) | *15* |
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| This is moral perfection: to live each day as though it were the last; to be tranquil, sincere, yet not indifferent to one’s fate. (Book vii., § 69.) | *16* |
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| The Brevity of Life  CAST from thee all other things and hold fast to a few precepts such as these: forget not that every man’s real life is but the present moment,—an indivisible point of time,—and that all the rest of his life hath either passed away or is uncertain. Short, then, the time that any man may live; and small the earthly niche wherein he hath his home; and short is longest fame,—a whisper passed from race to race of dying men, ignorant concerning themselves, and much less really knowing thee, who died so long ago. (Book iii., § 10.) | *17* |
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| Vanity of Life  MANY are the doctors who have knit their brows over their patients and now are dead themselves; many are the astrologers who in their day esteemed themselves renowned in foretelling the death of others, yet now they too are dead. Many are the philosophers who have held countless discussions upon death and immortality, and yet themselves have shared the common lot; many the valiant warriors who have slain their thousands and yet have themselves been slain by Death; many are the rulers and the kings of the earth, who, in their arrogance, have exercised over others the power of life or death as though they were themselves beyond the hazard of Fate, and yet themselves have, in their turn, felt Death’s remorseless power. Nay, even great cities—Helice, Pompeii, Herculaneum—have, so to speak, died utterly. Recall, one by one, the names of thy friends who have died; how many of these, having closed the eyes of their kinsmen, have in a brief time been buried also. To conclude: keep ever before thee the brevity and vanity of human life and all that is therein; for man is conceived to-day, and to-morrow will be a mummy or ashes. Pass, therefore, this moment of life in accord with the will of Nature, and depart in peace: even as does the olive, which in its season, fully ripe, drops to the ground, blessing its mother, the earth, which bore it, and giving thanks to the tree which put it forth. (Book iv., § 48.) | *18* |
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| A simple yet potent help to enable one to despise Death is to recall those who, in their greed for life, tarried the longest here. Wherein had they really more than those who were cut off untimely in their bloom? Together, at last, somewhere, they all repose in death. Cadicianus, Fabius, Julianus, Lepidus, or any like them, who bore forth so many to the tomb, were, in their turn, borne thither also. Their longer span was but trivial! Think too, of the cares thereof, of the people with whom it was passed, of the infirmities of the flesh! All vanity! Think of the infinite deeps of Time in the past, of the infinite depths to be! And in that vast profound of Time, what difference is there between a life of three centuries and the three days’ life of a little child! (Book iv., § 50.) | *19* |
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| Think of the Universe of matter!—an atom thou! Think of the eternity of Time—thy predestined time but a moment! Reflect upon the great plan of Fate—how trivial this destiny of thine! (Book v., § 24.) | *20* |
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| All things are enveloped in such darkness that they have seemed utterly incomprehensible to those who have led the philosophic life—and those too not a few in number, nor of ill-repute. Nay, even to the Stoics the course of affairs seems an enigma. Indeed, every conclusion reached seems tentative; for where is the man to be found who does not change his conclusions? Think too of the things men most desire,—riches, reputation, and the like,—and consider how ephemeral they are, how vain! A vile wretch, a common strumpet, or a thief, may possess them. Then think of the habits and manners of those about thee—how difficult it is to endure the least offensive of such people—nay how difficult, most of all, it is to endure one’s self! | *21* |
| Amidst such darkness, then, and such unworthiness, amidst this eternal change, with all temporal things and even Time itself passing away, with all things moving in eternal motion, I cannot imagine what, in all this, is worthy of a man’s esteem or serious effort. (Book v., § 10.) | *22* |
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| Death  TO cease from bodily activity, to end all efforts of will and of thought, to stop all these forever, is no evil. For do but contemplate thine own life as a child, a growing lad, a youth, an old man: the change to each of these periods was the death of the period which preceded it. Why then fear the death of all these—the death of thyself? Think too of thy life under the care of thy grandfather, then of thy life under the care of thy mother, then under the care of thy father, and so on with every change that hath occurred in thy life, and then ask thyself concerning any change that hath yet to be, Is there anything to fear? And then shall all fear, even of the great change,—the change of death itself,—vanish and flee away. (Book ix., § 21.) | *23* |
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| Fame  CONTEMPLATE men as from some lofty height. How innumerable seem the swarms of men! How infinite their pomps and ceremonies! How they wander to and fro upon the deep in fair weather and in storm! How varied their fate in their births, in their lives, in their deaths! Think of the lives of those who lived long ago, of those who shall follow thee, of those who now live in uncivilized lands who have not even heard of thy name, and, of those who have heard it, how many will soon forget it; of how many there are who now praise thee who will soon malign thee,—and thence conclude the vanity of fame, glory, reputation. (Book ix., §30.) | *24* |
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| Prayer  THE GODS are all-powerful or they are not. If they are not, why pray to them at all? If they are, why dost thou not pray to them to remove from thee all desire and all fear, rather than to ask from them the things thou longest for, or the removal of those things of which thou art in fear? For if the gods can aid men at all, surely they will grant this request. Wilt thou say that the removal of all fear and of all desire is within thine own power? If so, is it not better, then, to use the strength the gods have given, rather than in a servile and fawning way to long for those things which our will cannot obtain? And who hath said to thee that the gods will not *strengthen* thy will? I say unto thee, begin to pray that this may come to pass, and thou shalt see what shall befall thee. One man prays that he may enjoy a certain woman: let thy prayer be to not have even the desire so to do. Another man prays that he may not be forced to do his duty: let thy prayer be that thou mayest not even desire to be relieved of its performance. Another man prays that he may not lose his beloved son: let thy prayer be that even the fear of losing him may be taken away. Let these be thy prayers, and thou shalt see what good will befall thee. (Book ix., § 41.) | *25* |
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| Faith  THE UNIVERSE is either a chaos or a fortuitous aggregation and dispersion of atoms; or else it is builded in order and harmony and ruled by Wisdom. If then it is the former, why should one wish to tarry in a hap-hazard disordered mass? Why should I be concerned except to know how soon I may cease to be? Why should I be disquieted concerning what I do, since whatever I may do, the elements of which I am composed will at last, at last be scattered? But if the latter thought be true, then I reverence the Divine One; I trust; I possess my soul in peace. (Book vi., § 10.) | *26* |
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| Pain  IF pain cannot be borne, we die. If it continue a long time it becomes endurable; and the mind, retiring into itself, can keep its own tranquillity and the true self be still unharmed. If the body feel the pain, let the body make its moan. (Book vii., § 30.) | *27* |
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| Love and Forgiveness for the Evil-Doer  IF it be in thy power, teach men to do better. If not, remember it is always in thy power to forgive. The gods are so merciful to those who err, that for some purposes they grant their aid to such men by conferring upon them health, riches, and honor. What prevents thee from doing likewise? (Book ix., § 11.) | *28* |
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| Eternal Change the Law of the Universe  THINK, often, of how swiftly all things pass away and are no more—the works of Nature and the works of man. The substance of the Universe—matter—is like unto a river that flows on forever. All things are not only in a constant state of change, but they are the cause of constant and infinite change in other things. Upon a narrow ledge thou standest! Behind thee, the bottomless abyss of the Past! In front of thee, the Future that will swallow up all things that now are! Over what things, then, in this present life, wilt thou, O foolish man, be disquieted or exalted—making thyself wretched; seeing that they can vex thee only for a time—a brief, brief time! (Book v., § 23.) | *29* |
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| The Perfect Liberty of the Good Man  PERADVENTURE men may curse thee, torture thee, kill thee; yet can all these things not prevent thee from keeping at all times thy thoughts pure, considerate, sober, and just. If one should stand beside a limpid stream and cease not to revile it, would the spring stop pouring forth its refreshing waters? Nay, if such an one should even cast into the stream mud and mire, would not the stream quickly scatter it, and so bear it away that not even a trace would remain? How then wilt thou be able to have within thee not a mere well that may fail thee, but a fountain that shall never cease to flow? By wonting thyself every moment to independence in judgment, joined together with serenity of thought and simplicity in act and bearing. (Book viii., § 51.) | *30* |
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| The Harmony and Unity of the Universe  O DIVINE Spirit of the Universe, Thy will, Thy wish is mine! Calmly I wait Thy appointed times, which cannot come too early or too late! Thy providences are all fruitful to me! Thou art the source, Thou art the stay, Thou art the end of all things. The poet says of his native city, “Dear city of Cecrops”; and shall I not say of the Universe, “Beloved City of God”? (Book iv., § 23.) | *31* |
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| EITHER there is a predestined order in the Universe, or else it is mere aggregation, fortuitous yet not without a certain kind of order. For how within thyself can a certain system exist and yet the entire Universe be chaos? And especially when in the Universe all things, though separate and divided, yet work together in unity? (Book iv., § 27.) | *32* |
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| THINK always of the Universe as one living organism, composed of one material substance and one soul. Observe how all things are the product of a single conception—the conception of a living organism. Observe how one force is the cause of the motion of all things: that all existing things are the concurrent causes of all that is to be—the eternal warp and woof of the ever-weaving web of existence. (Book iv., § 40.) | *33* |
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| The Conduct of Life  COUNTRY houses, retreats in the mountains or by the sea—these things men seek out for themselves; and often thou, too, dost most eagerly desire such things. But this does but betoken the greatest ignorance; for thou art able, when thou desirest, to retreat into thyself. No otherwhere can a man find a retreat more quiet and free from care than in his own soul; and most of all, when he hath such rules of conduct that if faithfully remembered, they will give to him perfect equanimity,—for equanimity is naught else than a mind harmoniously disciplined. Cease not then to betake thyself to this retreat, there to refresh thyself. Let thy rules of conduct be few and well settled; so that when thou hast thought thereon, straightway they will suffice to thoroughly purify the soul that possesses them, and to send thee back, restless no more, to the things to the which thou must return. With what indeed art thou disquieted? With the wickedness of men? Meditate on the thought that men do not do evil of set purpose. Remember also how many in the past, who, after living in enmity, suspicion, hatred, and strife one with another, now lie prone in death and are but ashes. Fret then no more. But perhaps thou art troubled concerning the portion decreed to thee in the Universe? Remember this alternative: either there is a Providence or simply matter! Recall all the proofs that the world is, as it were, a city or a commonwealth! But perhaps the desires of the body still torment thee? Forget not, then, that the mind, when conscious of its real self, when self-reliant, shares not the agitations of the body, be they great or small. Recall too all thou hast learned (and now holdest as true) concerning pleasure and pain. But perhaps what men call Fame allures thee? Behold how quickly all things are forgotten! Before us, after us, the formless Void of endless ages! How vain is human praise! How fickle and undiscriminating those who seem to praise! How limited the sphere of the greatest fame! For the whole earth is but a point in space, thy dwelling-place a tiny nook therein. How few are those who dwell therein, and what manner of men are those who will praise thee! | *34* |
| Therefore, forget not to retire into thine own little country place,—thyself. Above all, be not diverted from thy course. Be serene, be free, contemplate all things as a man, as a lover of his kind, and of his country—yet withal as a being born to die. Have readiest to thy hand, above all others, these two thoughts: one, that *things* cannot touch the soul; the other, that things are perpetually changing and ceasing to be. Remember how many of these changes thou thyself hast seen! The Universe is change. But as thy thoughts are, so thy life shall be. (Book iv., § 3.) | *35* |
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| All things that befall thee should seem to thee as natural as roses in spring or fruits in autumn: such things, I mean, as disease, death, slander, dissimulation, and all other things which give pleasure or pain to foolish men. (Book iv., § 44.) | *36* |
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| Be thou like a lofty headland. Endlessly against it dash the waves; yet it stands unshaken, and lulls to rest the fury of the sea. (Book iv., § 49.) | *37* |
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| “Unhappy me upon whom this misfortune hath fallen!”—nay, rather thou shouldst say, “Fortunate I, that having met with such a misfortune, I am able to endure it without complaining; in the present not dismayed, in the future dreading no evil. Such a misadventure might have befallen a man who could not, perchance, have endured it without grievous suffering.” Why then shouldst thou call *anything* that befalls thee a misfortune, and not the rather a blessing? Is that a “misfortune,” in all cases, which does not defeat the purpose of man’s nature? and does that defeat man’s nature which his *Will* can accept? And what that *Will* can accept, thou knowest. Can this misadventure, then, prevent thy Will from being just, magnanimous, temperate, circumspect, free from rashness or error, considerate, independent? Can it prevent thy Will from being, in short, all that becomes a man? Remember, then, should anything befall thee which might cause thee to complain, to fortify thyself with this truth: this is not a misfortune, while to endure it nobly is a blessing. (Book iv., § 49.) | *38* |
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| Be not annoyed or dismayed or despondent if thou art not able to do all things in accord with the rules of right conduct. When thou hast not succeeded, renew thy efforts, and be serene if, in most things, thy conduct is such as becomes a man. Love and pursue the philosophic life. Seek Philosophy, not as thy taskmaster but to find a medicine for all thy ills, as thou wouldst seek balm for thine eyes, a bandage for a sprain, a lotion for a fever. So it shall come to pass that the voice of Reason shall guide thee and bring to thee rest and peace. Remember, too, that Philosophy enjoins only such things as are in accord with thy better nature. The trouble is, that in thy heart thou preferrest those things which are not in accord with thy better nature. For thou sayest, “What can be more delightful than these things?” But is not the word “delightful” in this sense misleading? Are not magnanimity, broad-mindedness, sincerity, equanimity, and a reverent spirit more “delightful”? Indeed, what is more “delightful” than Wisdom, if so be thou wilt but reflect upon the strength and contentment of mind and the happiness of life that spring from the exercise of the powers of thy reason and thine intelligence? (Book v., § 9.) | *39* |
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| As are thy wonted thoughts, so is thy mind; and the soul is tinged by the coloring of the mind. Let then thy mind be constantly suffused with such thoughts as these: Where it is possible for a man to live, there he can live nobly. But suppose he must live in a palace? Be it so; even there he can live nobly. (Book v., § 16.) | *40* |
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| Live with the gods! And he so lives who at all times makes it manifest that he is content with his predestined lot, fulfilling the entire will of the indwelling spirit given to man by the Divine Ruler, and which is in truth nothing else than the Understanding—the Reason of man. (Book v., § 27.) | *41* |
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| Seek the solitude of thy spirit. This is the law of the indwelling Reason—to be self-content and to abide in peace when what is right and just hath been done. (Book vii., § 28.) | *42* |
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| Let thine eyes follow the stars in their courses as though their movements were thine own. Meditate on the eternal transformation of Matter. Such thoughts purge the mind of earthly passion and desire. (Book vii., § 45.) | *43* |
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| Search thou thy heart! Therein is the fountain of good! Do thou but dig, and abundantly the stream shall gush forth. (Book vii., § 59.) | *44* |
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| Be not unmindful of the graces of life. Let thy body be stalwart, yet not ungainly either in motion or in repose. Let not thy face alone, but thy whole body, make manifest the alertness of thy mind. Yet let all this be without affectation. (Book vii., § 60.) | *45* |
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| Thy breath is part of the all-encircling air, and is one with it. Let thy mind be part, no less, of that Supreme Mind comprehending all things. For verily, to him who is willing to be inspired thereby, the Supreme Mind flows through all things and permeates all things as truly as the air exists for him who will but breathe. (Book viii., § 54.) | *46* |
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| Men are created that they may live for each other. Teach them to be better or bear with them as they are. (Book viii., § 59.) | *47* |
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| Write no more, Antoninus, about what a good man is or what he ought to do. *Be* a good man. (Book x., § 16.) | *48* |
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| Look steadfastly at any created thing. See! it is changing, melting into corruption, and ready to be dissolved. In its essential nature, it was born but to die. (Book x., § 18.) | *49* |
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| Co-workers are we all, toward one result. Some, consciously and of set purpose; others, unwittingly even as men who sleep,—of whom Heraclitus (I think it is he) says they also are co-workers in the events of the Universe. In diverse fashion also men work; and abundantly, too, work the fault-finders and the hinderers,—for even of such as these the Universe hath need. It rests then with thee to determine with what workers thou wilt place thyself; for He who governs all things will without failure place thee at thy proper task, and will welcome thee to some station among those who work and act together. (Book vi., § 42.) | *50* |
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| Unconstrained and in supreme joyousness of soul thou mayest live though all men revile thee as they list, and though wild beasts rend in pieces the unworthy garment—thy body. For what prevents thee, in the midst of all this, from keeping thyself in profound calm, with a true judgment of thy surroundings and a helpful knowledge of the things that are seen? So that the Judgment may say to whatever presents itself, “In truth this is what thou really art, howsoever thou appearest to men;” and thy Knowledge may say to whatsoever may come beneath its vision, “Thee I sought; for whatever presents itself to me is fit material for nobility in personal thought and public conduct; in short, for skill in work for man or for God.” For all things which befall us are related to God or to man, and are not new to us or hard to work upon, but familiar and serviceable. (Book vii., § 68.) | *51* |
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| When thou art annoyed at some one’s impudence, straightway ask thyself, “Is it possible that there should be no impudent men in the world?” It is impossible. Ask not then the impossible. For such an one is but one of these impudent persons who needs must be in the world. Keep before thee like conclusions also concerning the rascal, the untrustworthy one, and all evil-doers. Then, when it is quite clear to thy mind that such men must needs exist, thou shalt be the more forgiving toward each one of their number. This also will aid thee to observe, whensoever occasion comes, what power for good, Nature hath given to man to frustrate such viciousness. She hath bestowed upon man Patience as an antidote to the stupid man, and against another man some other power for good. Besides, it is wholly in thine own power to teach new things to the one who hath erred, for every one who errs hath but missed the appointed path and wandered away. Reflect, and thou wilt discover that no one of these with whom thou art annoyed hath done aught to debase thy *mind,* and that is the only real evil that can befall thee. | *52* |
| Moreover, wherein is it wicked or surprising that the ignorant man should act ignorantly? Is not the error really thine own in not foreseeing that such an one would do as he did? If thou hadst but taken thought thou wouldst have known he would be prone to err, and it is only because thou hast forgotten to use thy Reason that thou art surprised at his deed. Above all, when thou condemnest another as untruthful, examine thyself closely; for upon thee rests the blame, in that thou dost trust to such an one to keep his promise. If thou didst bestow upon him thy bounty, thine is the blame not to have given it freely, and without expectation of good to thee, save the doing of the act itself. What more dost thou wish than to do good to man? Doth not this suffice,—that thou hast done what conforms to thy true nature? Must thou then have a reward, as though the eyes demanded pay for seeing or the feet for walking? For even as these are formed for such work, and by co-operating in their distinctive duty come into their own, even so man (by his real nature disposed to do good), when he hath done some good deed, or in any other way furthered the Commonweal, acts according to his own nature, and in so doing hath all that is truly his own. (Book ix., § 42.) | *53* |
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| O Man, thou hast been a citizen of this great State, the Universe! What matters what thy prescribed time hath been, five years or three? What the law prescribes is just to every one. | *54* |
| Why complain, then, if thou art sent away from the State, not by a tyrant or an unjust judge, but by Nature who led thee thither,—even as the manager excuses from the stage an actor whom he hath employed? | *55* |
| “But I have played three acts only?” | *56* |
| True. But in the drama of thy life three acts conclude the play. For what its conclusion shall be, He determines who created it and now ends it; and with either of these thou hast naught to do. Depart thou, then, well pleased; for He who dismisses thee is well pleased also. (Book xii., § 36.) | *57* |
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| BE not disquieted lest, in the days to come, some misadventure befall thee. The Reason which now sufficeth thee will then be with thee, should there be the need. (Book vii., § 8.) | *58* |
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| TO the wise man the dictates of Reason seem the instincts of Nature. (Book vii., § 11.) | *59* |
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| MY true self—the philosophic mind—hath but one dread: the dread lest I do something unworthy of a man, or that I may act in an unseemly way or at an improper time. (Book vii., § 20.) | *60* |
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| ACCEPT with joy the Fate that befalls thee. Thine it is and not another’s. What then could be better for thee? (Book vii., § 57.) | *61* |
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| SEE to it that thou art humane to those who are not humane. (Book vii., § 65.) | *62* |
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| HE who does *not* act, often commits as great a wrong as he who acts. (Book ix., § 5.) | *63* |
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| THE WRONG that another has done—let alone! Add not to it thine own. (Book ix., § 20.) | *64* |
|  |  |
| HOW powerful is man! He is able to do all that God wishes him to do. He is able to accept all that God sends upon him. (Book xii., § 11.) | *65* |
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| A LAMP sends forth its light until it is completely extinguished. Shall Truth and Justice and Equanimity suffer abatement in thee until all are extinguished in death? (Book xii., § 15.) |  |

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