

MEDITATIONS

BY MARCUS AURELIUS



NEW!
TRANSLATED DIRECTLY
FROM ANCIENT GREEK
(BETA CODE)
WITH AI

TRANSLATED BY
THOMAS HJELDE THORESEN
(AND GPT-3)

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Read the corresponding blog post:
<https://thomasht86.github.io/blog/searching-for-lost-wisdom-with-gpt-3/>

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Introduction

Marcus Aurelius' Meditations is a timeless classic that has been studied and appreciated for centuries. Written by the Roman Emperor and Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius, this collection of personal reflections on life and philosophy offers insight into the mind of one of history's great leaders.

In this new translation, we present a fresh interpretation of Aurelius' Meditations based on an Ancient Greek version by Jan Hendrik Leopold, written in 1908. The translation was created using state-of-the-art AI technology, specifically GPT3 with the "text-davinci-003" engine. The source of the text is the Perseus Project (beta code version), a digital library of ancient texts.

While this AI-generated translation has its limitations, we believe it offers a unique perspective on Aurelius' work that will be of interest to scholars and casual readers alike. We acknowledge that this translation may not be perfect and may contain errors or inconsistencies. Nonetheless, we hope that this new edition will contribute to the ongoing conversation surrounding Aurelius' Meditations and encourage further study and reflection.

Disclaimer

I would like to emphasize that this translation is AI-generated and as such, may not be perfect. While the GPT3 technology used for this translation is highly advanced, it is not without limitations.

Therefore, readers should approach this translation with an open mind and understand that it may contain errors or inconsistencies. I

would encourage readers to compare this translation with other translations and to consult the original text for a more complete understanding of Aurelius' Meditations.

BOOK I

I.

To honor the gods and be free from anger. To remember the origin of the universe and its unchangeable nature. To revere one's mother and to be generous and affectionate, not only in punishing wrongdoers, but also in forming opinions. Also, to be moderate in one's desires and to strive for justice. To avoid public disputes and to use good teachers at home, and to know that one must examine such matters thoroughly.

II.

To not become a Prasian, Benetian, Palmoularian, or Scouterian; to be frugal and not too needy; to be self-sufficient and not boastful; and to avoid slander.

III.

To be open-minded; to be skeptical of those who claim to perform miracles and to have knowledge of the gods and such things; to not be superstitious; to be brave; to listen first to Bacchius, then to Tandasis and Marcianus; to read dialogues in childhood; to desire gifts and such things of Greek education.

IV.

Take care to receive a good imagination to use for correction and healing of the mind, and not to be drawn into foolishness, nor to write about matters of opinion, or to engage in rhetorical or poetic discourses, or to show off in a showy or active way. Avoid rhetoric, poetry and superstition. Don't walk around the house in a toga, or do such things. Write letters simply, like the one I wrote to my mother from Sinope. Respond to those who insult and mock you calmly and courteously, since they usually come out of ignorance. Think carefully and don't be satisfied with superficial understanding, or be too quick to agree. Oppose Epicureans with the memory of what has been given to us.

V.

To be free and unencumbered, to look at no one else and to speak no more than necessary, to be content with what is natural and necessary, to accept pain and sickness with courage, to remain unruffled in the face of criticism, to be able to see the good in all people, to learn from experience and to accept advice gracefully, and to be able to receive favors from friends without feeling embarrassed or obligated.

IX.

Think about the example of your household, and the way it is managed. Consider the nature of the universe, and its simplicity. Be mindful of your friends and their loyalty. Be generous to strangers and those in need. Be courteous to all, so that you may be a good neighbor. Show kindness and tact in dealing with the necessities of life. Never give in to anger or any other passion, but remain calm and gentle. Speak with kindness and act with dignity.

VII.

Alexander the grammarian should not be criticized harshly or ridiculed for his mistakes, but rather be gently corrected in a way that shows understanding of the matter, not of the words, or any other such subtle distinction.

VIII.

To be able to face those in power with confidence and composure, and to show no sign of fear or servility, and to maintain one's own principles in all circumstances.

We should call those who are hostile to us our benefactors, for they make us better.

IX.

I should not often say to anyone, or even write in a letter, that I am sorry, nor should I keep on apologizing for my actions towards those I have dealings with, but rather show them by my actions that I have done my best.

X.

Have a sense of respect for everyone, and be ready to show it, not just by words, but by actually trying and proving it. Be thankful for your teachers, remembering what was said about Domitius and Athenodotus. Show true love for your children.

XI.

To be a friend to my brother Severus, to be affectionate and kind to him, to know his character, Elpidius, Cato, Dion, Brutus, and to take on the same attitude of politeness, justice, and self-control, and to honor the freedom of rulers most of all: and still to be the same and equal in honor with him; and to be enthusiastic and generous, and to have hope and faith in being loved by friends; and to be discreet in recognizing him: and not to show any arrogance towards his friends about what he wants or doesn't want, but to be gentle.

XII.

To control myself and not to be carried away by anything; and to be content with the other things that come my way.

In his thoughts: and the strength of his purpose and gentleness and moderation; and not to be diverted from what is present to what is past; and to believe that he thinks and acts rightly in whatever he does; and to look upon the inconstant and changing and unstable as nothing; or as something to be despised, or as a dream, or as a bubble, or as a shadow; and to value the unfading and unchangeable; and the kindly and the helpful; and the unpretentious; and to give free rein to his imagination rather than restrain it; and that no one ever got the better of him in argument or ever made him change his opinion; and to be thankful.

XIII.

Today, remember to be mindful of those who judge you, to be respectful of those who honor you, to be generous and kind, to be of service to those who need it, to be forgiving of those who wrong you, to be consistent in what you do, to be wise in your conversations, to be humble and not boastful, to be open to those who need help, and to be thoughtful and deliberate in your decisions.

Think of the beauty of nature, the skill of the craftsman, the order of the universe, the laws of the state, the self-control of the wise, the ability to provide for the future, the ability to be content with what you have, the ability to speak without flattery or criticism, the ability to be unaffected by the opinions of others, the ability to be kind and grateful, the ability to take care of your body without being too indulgent, the ability to admire the wise without envy, and the ability to act according to your own principles. Do all these things with respect for your country's customs. Do not be boastful about it.

Do not be ashamed of your origins. Also, do not be too proud of your possessions, status, and accomplishments; instead, remember that they can be taken away from you just as easily. Do not be too attached to material things, but rather focus on what is essential and simple. Be generous and considerate in your actions, and do not seek praise or recognition. Do not be too eager for wealth, fame, or physical pleasure. Remember the saying of Lycurgus: "Be as ready to give up what you have as to get what you do not have." It is a sign of strength and courage to be able to accept and endure what is given to you, and to be able to do without what you do not have.

XIV.

From the gods, receive the gift of a good mind, a good disposition.

Have respect for all people, including your teachers, family, relatives, friends, and neighbors. Do not let anything they do lead you to be angry with them, and have a disposition that allows you to say, if necessary, something like this:

Be determined to have no opinion about anything that is beyond what is necessary, so that I may be able to be free from any fault or blame. Not to be carried away by the appearance of things and to be free from the habit of wanting things beyond what is necessary. To be obedient to the ruler and to be a good father. To be able to bear what happens to me without complaining and to understand that it is possible to live a good life without the use of luxuries, without the need for fame or reputation, and without the need for expensive lamps and other such things. To be able to take care of myself and not be inferior or superior to others in the performance of what is necessary. To be able to respect my brother and to be able to help him with justice and kindness. To not let my children become spoiled and to not be angry with them. To not be too involved in rhetoric and poetry and to not be too attached to the opinions of others. To be able to control my desires and not be too eager for things. To be familiar with the works of Apollonius, Rusticus, and Maximus. To be able to contemplate the nature of life and to understand what is truly important, so that I may be able to live in harmony with the gods and to be content with what I have.

I should not forget to act according to my nature, and to keep the memories of the gods in my mind, and to be devoted to their teachings. To bear my body in such a way, not to be affected by either Benedick or Theodotus, but even later to be able to take part in love affairs without being ashamed. To bear many rebukes from Rusticus without being angry, and to remember that I was born for this, and that all that happens to me is familiar and of the same kind as happens to everyone else. To have such a wife, so as to think her faithful, affectionate, and free from passion. To provide my children with the necessary things, and not to let them be spoiled by luxury, and to use the same things myself in Campania as I would at home. To practice philosophy in such a way that I do not fall into the hands of any sophist, nor be ashamed of writing, or of examining syllogisms, or of discussing meteorological phenomena. For all these things are seen to be the gifts of the gods and of fortune.

BOOK II

I.

I must remind myself to act with kindness, joy, humility, patience, and generosity. All these qualities have been given to us to use in the knowledge of good and bad. I have come to understand the nature of the good as being beautiful, and the nature of the bad as being ugly, and the nature of the one who does wrong as being my kinsman, not in blood or seed, but in mind and divinity. No one can force me to do wrong: no one can make me angry or submissive. We are all meant to work together like feet, hands, eyelids, and the upper and lower rows of teeth. So we should oppose each other's nature, but not harm each other.

What am I? I am body and spirit and the ruling part. Forget the books: don't be distracted. Don't give in, but rather, as if you had already cast off the body, despise it: it's a mere pot, a jar, a vessel of skin, full of blood and bile and phlegm. And consider the spirit too, what it is: a breath, never the same, but always changing and again vanishing. So there is a third thing, the ruling part. Be clear about this: it is good; don't let it be enslaved, don't let it be disturbed by external impressions, don't let it be weakened by pleasure or pain.

II.

The plans of the gods are great. The order of the universe is not a result of confusion or complexity. Everything is arranged according to what is necessary and beneficial for the whole world. Every part has its own goodness, which brings the harmony of the whole and is beneficial to it. The world is changed, like the elements, and so are the combinations of things. Remember these things and keep them in mind. Don't be overwhelmed by the abundance of books, but be truly grateful to the gods from your heart.

Think of how these things come from the source and how much time you have been given by the gods. Now consider that you are part of the universe and part of the one who governs it. Also, that your allotted time is limited and if you don't use it to its fullest, it will be gone and you won't get it back.

Be careful to act with restraint, as a Roman and a human being, with kindness, modesty, and integrity, and to do nothing in life that is not in keeping with your true character. Then, each day, you will be able to look back on your life and be content with what you have done, without any regrets or shame. Remember, there are few things that can make life truly worthwhile, and if you can keep hold of them, you will be able to live a happy life. For the gods will ask for nothing more from you than that you do these things.

VI.

Give up your pride, accept humility, and remember: to be honored is a burden.

You have no more time to waste: your life is short, so don't let it slip away unnoticed, but rather be mindful and live it with joy.

III.

Think of what is pressing on you and how you can best respond with kindness and moderation. Let go of the other distractions and focus on what is important. People who are busy and have no purpose often get overwhelmed and lose sight of what matters.

IV.

It is not necessary for me to be disturbed by what happens in another's mind; I need not be driven by them into a worse state of mind.

VI.

Always remember what kind of part of the whole you are and how you fit into it. No one can interfere with the nature of things, and you should always act and speak accordingly.

VII.

Godfrey of Bouillon said in his criticism of faults that it is worse to do wrong out of desire than out of anger. For the one who acts out of anger appears to be rejecting reason with some passion and heat, while the one who does wrong out of desire seems to be more shameless and more depraved in his wrongdoing. Therefore, it is right for philosophy to consider the one who does wrong out of desire as a greater crime than the one who does wrong out of anger.

He should also remember to be tolerant towards those who oppose him, bearing in mind that they are doing so out of ignorance.

VIII.

Being able to live life, one should do, say, and think accordingly. What comes from other people should not be feared, if there are gods or not. For it would not be more difficult for you. If there are no gods or they do not care for humans, why am I in a world without gods or providence? But even if there are gods and they care for humans, and even if the bad are punished according to justice, one should not be afraid. What kind of life would one have if one did not act like a human? Not through ignorance, nor through knowledge, but through necessity or lack of skill, the good and bad are distributed among good and bad people alike. Death and life, glory and dishonor, pain and pleasure, wealth and poverty, all these are shared among good and bad people, neither being entirely good or bad.

IX.

Everything changes quickly, our bodies in the world and our memories in time. How fleeting and unreliable are all the things we experience, whether they bring pleasure, fear, or pain! How quickly they pass away and are gone!

X.

We should strive to understand what these voices of praise and approval mean. What is death, and what if we only see it and break down its components in our minds? Is there anything else that could be said about it other than it is a mere act of dissolution? If someone is afraid of it, it is childish. Not only is it an act of dissolution, but it is also beneficial. How does a human relate to God and in what way, and how can we make sense of this human condition?

XI.

No more complex than the whole circle of things, and searching for what is born from them (as they say), and seeking what is in the souls of our neighbors through investigation, without being disgusted that it is enough for me to be my own guide and healer. The healing of himself consists in keeping a pure mind and justice and kindness towards what comes from gods and men. For what comes from gods is to be received with reverence; and what comes from men, with affection due to relationship; and there is also a certain divine and gracious way of distinguishing between good and evil. This nature of distinguishing should not be neglected.

XII.

Moreover, remember that you must live three thousand years, or as many thousands, yet no one will ever take away this life of yours, nor will you ever have another life instead of this one. Therefore, the least of things is fixed for the greatest. For what is the amount of time compared to eternity?

We should remember two things: one, that all things from eternity are of the same kind and linked together and that there is no difference between one time and another; and two, that even the longest-lived and the swiftest-dying have the same end. For the present is only a moment, and what is not present has no existence at all, so that it cannot be taken away.

XIII.

"Let everything be done with moderation. For I say to myself, let the words I speak be fitting, and also the deeds I do, if anyone should judge them according to truth."

XIV.

When the soul of a person is most free from passions and the noise of the world, and is most alone with itself, it is then most able to reflect on what happens to it. To be unaffected by the events of life is a sign of great strength. When someone is insulted or treated unfairly, it is natural to feel anger. Thirdly, when pleasure or pain come, it is natural to be affected. Fourthly, when one acts or speaks in a way that is not true to oneself, it is natural to feel shame. Fifthly, when one does something without purpose or thought, it is natural to feel regret. Lastly, it is important to pay attention to the small details in order to reach one's goal.

The goal of wise men is to conform to the laws and customs of the state with reason and order.

XV.

Life of a human being is made up of time, possessions, feelings, physical condition, appearance, reputation, and voice. All of these are like rivers, dreams, and smoke, while life itself is a battle and a disease. Vanity is a joke. What can we rely on then? Only philosophy.

It is the only thing that is not subject to change, offering both pleasure and pain without any deception or hypocrisy. Accepting what is inevitable and unavoidable, it leads us to where we need to go. Facing death with wisdom, it sees no difference between the elements that make up each living thing. If these elements cannot be changed, why should we fear the change and dissolution of all things? It is all natural. Nothing is bad by nature.

In Carnuntum.

BOOK III

I.

Only think that each day your life is slipping away, but also consider that if you live longer, it will be no worse, if your mind remains in harmony with the sequence of events and your understanding of the connection between gods and humans. For if you are able to keep your spirit from being overwhelmed and to stop it from being carried away by the things that appear, and if you can use your principles to judge what is right and to examine what is obvious, and if you can accept what is already clear and use it to guide your actions, then you will be able to live in harmony. So don't just think of death as something that happens each day, but also use your understanding of events and your awareness to prepare for it.

II.

Think and reflect on how even the smallest things that happen have some benefit and purpose. For example, when a piece of art is broken, it can still be used in some way. Similarly, when a fruit is ripe, it adds a certain beauty to its appearance. Even the buzzing of bees, the chirping of birds, and the sound of a person's breath can all be appreciated in their own way.

Be mindful of the universe, and constantly strive to align yourself with it. If someone has a strong opinion and a deep attachment to the things of this world, they will not be able to see or understand how to separate themselves from them. They will not be able to see the true nature of things, or the way they are portrayed in writing and art. They will not be able to see the beauty of an old man, or the innocence of a child, or the grace of a moment, or the divine in everyday life. These things are not accessible to everyone, but only to those who are in tune with the universe and its workings.

III.

Hippocrates himself died. The Chaldeans had predicted many deaths, and then it happened. Alexander, Pompey, and Caesar, conquering many cities and leading many thousands of infantry and cavalry, all eventually died. Heraclitus, after pondering the universe, died of thirst. Democritus and Socrates were killed by others. What does this mean? He concluded: if there is another life, there are no gods without purpose; if there is not, then, having accepted a brief amount of pain and pleasure, and having honored this divine gift of life, we should be content with what we have - our mind and our body.

IV.

Think of what should be done and by whom, and what they say and think and do, and all the other things that happen in the course of one's own governing observation. So, focus on the task at hand and the thought that it is enough to be just, courageous, self-controlled, and free from all other passions. Imagine a person who is free from all pain, fear, and desire, and who is content with what is naturally within their power. Think of them as a god-like being, blessed with all good things, and untouched by any evil. Picture them as a person who is free from all suffering, and who is able to bear all things bravely and with dignity, and who is never overwhelmed by anything.

Remember to act or to think. For only to himself is given the power to act and to understand what is in his power to do, and to recognize that these things are good. He should also remember that all rational beings are related, and that it is our duty to care for all people according to their human nature, but that true excellence is not shared by all, but only by those who live according to their nature. Those who do not live this way, however, however great their wealth, their household, their estate, and their daily life may be, are to be pitied, not praised. No praise is due to them, nor do they themselves take pleasure in it.

V.

VI.

Be neither heard nor seen nor noticed, nor have your thoughts be shaped by others. Don't be too elaborate or too verbose. Let there be a god within you, impartial and true to itself, like a Roman and a ruler, who observes what is fitting and proper in life, without being influenced by anyone or needing anyone's approval. Be straightforward and honest, not contrived.

VII.

If you find something better in human life than justice, truth, self-control, courage and moderation, use your reason to hold on to it and in the face of all external temptations remain devoted to it. If nothing better appears, then accept the divine element within you and examine your own impressions and feelings, as Socrates said, without conceit and with due respect for the gods and for other people. If you find all other things to be small and secondary, give no place to anything else, but keep your attention firmly on that which is good in itself, your own and unique.

For it is not difficult to be devoted to the rational and political good, such as fame, power, wealth, or pleasure. All these things, however, have been taken away and left behind. You, however, should simply and freely take hold of the better and cling to it. If it is the rational good, then keep it. If it is the natural good, then accept it and make a safe decision.

Honor yourself by accepting what you must do, even when it is difficult to bear, such as enduring pain, giving up something you want, being kind to someone you dislike, controlling your anger, forgiving someone, and wanting what is good for someone else. For your mind and spirit, and the actions that come from them, should be free from all restraint.

Do not do anything extravagant, do not be ostentatious, do not be angry, do not try to outdo others. The greatest thing is to live without either pursuing or fleeing from anything, and to use the time given to us by our body and soul in the best way possible. We should accept our fate and move on, as if we were just another part of the universe, and use our life to nourish our intelligence and make it grow.

VIII.

No one in the disordered and confused state of mind should ever think of nothingness, or of a void, or of a lifeless body. Life does not change when one thinks of its end, as if one were to think of a tragedy coming to an end and its actors dispersing. Nor should one think of a slave, a fool, a coward, a beggar, or a madman.

IX.

Be guided by your higher self. In this way, nothing contrary to your nature will be imposed on you, and you will follow the path of reason and the way of life towards people and gods.

X.

All these things, then, are small and fleeting, and it should be remembered that each of us has only this present moment; the rest is either past or uncertain. So each of us has only a tiny part of the whole, a tiny part of the earth, and a tiny part of the whole duration of time. And even this brief moment is made up of successive and imperceptible moments, and is part of a larger cycle of events, which is unknown and beyond our control.

XI.

I should offer a suggestion to those who are disturbed: to write down the image of the person who has disturbed them, in such a way that they can see it for what it is, a lifeless thing, and to say to themselves: "This is not a person, but an image and a lifeless thing, which has been formed by nature and has been given the impression of a person, and has been given a name, and has been given whatever else has been given to it, out of those things which come from the same source. But I am not disturbed by an image, but by a person who has a share in the same intelligence and the same portion of the divine, and who is related to me and is a partner in the same opinion and the same way of life. Therefore, I will treat him with justice and fairness, as I would a fellow citizen, but I will also remember his nature and the source from which he has come."

XII.

Commit yourself to living in accordance with reason, diligently, without complaining, and without any distraction. Keep your inner spirit pure, as if you were offering it to the gods, without any hesitation.

XIII.

No one can stop you from being devoted to the present moment and acting with true courage and integrity. Be confident.

XIV.

Doctors say that organs and bones need careful treatment to avoid illness. So you should have the same attitude towards divine and human matters, and do everything, even the smallest, as part of a connection between them. You should not act in a way that is not in line with divine matters.

XV.

Do not wander around: you cannot recall your memories or the actions of the ancient Romans and Greeks, or the examples from the wise, which you have set for yourself. Hurry to the end and leave yourself no empty hopes, if anything is possible for you.

XVI.

Don't ask how much it means to steal, to scheme, to be angry, to envy, to speak badly of others - it's not seen with the eyes, but with something else.

XVII.

We should have a body that is obedient to our will, a mind that is in harmony with nature, and thoughts that are in agreement with the gods, the country, and those who act rightly. If the rest is in agreement with these, then the rest is secondary.

It is right to love goodness and to cling to what is in agreement with it, and to keep the guiding spirit within oneself free from all fear and disturbance, but to keep it in harmony with the universe, neither exalting itself above the truth nor lagging behind in the pursuit of what is just. If all people should fail him, he should not be distressed at this, nor turn aside from the path of goodness, which leads to the end of life pure, serene, and in harmony with its own nature.

BOOK IV

I.

When faced with external events, I should remain in control and be ready to adapt to whatever is given to me. I should not expect anything, but rather accept what comes with equanimity, like a flame that is not disturbed by the wind blowing around it. It will adjust its own light and heat to whatever is presented to it, becoming brighter or dimmer as needed.

II.

Do not act in haste, nor in any other way than according to plan. Act in a way that is consistent with your craft.

III.

Leave them asking for more, with a sense of awe and admiration, and show them that you can do these things with ease. It is all up to you, how much time you choose to devote to it.

It is easy to withdraw into yourself whenever you choose, and so be free from any disturbance. For no one can hinder you from turning your thoughts to yourself, and from examining and seeing what kind of a citizen of the world you are, and how you stand related to the gods and to your fellow-men. So constantly give yourself this retreat and renewal, and take yourself away from any that will not improve you.

What is there to be afraid of? The badness of mankind? Reflecting on the verdict that all living creatures are related and that to be part of justice is to be part of something great, and how many have already achieved it, been devoted to it, embraced it, and been honored for it, why be afraid?

But what about those who are excluded from all of this? Renewing the dichotomy of reason or atoms, and from what has been demonstrated that the world is like a city. But what about your body? Realizing that the soul is not moved lightly or quickly by any impulse or thought, since it retains its own nature and knowledge, and all that it has heard about pain and pleasure.

But what about death? Submitting to the common lot and the ever-turning cycle of matter, and the void of oblivion, and the transformation and instability of fame, and the narrowness of place, in which it is said: all this is but a moment and a point in space, and how many and what kind of people are those who are mentioned?

Remember that you are mortal and do not let yourself be overwhelmed by anything, but remain free and consider things as a human, a citizen, a mortal creature. In the most pressing matters, there are two things to keep in mind: first, that things do not depend on our will, but are determined by nature; and second, that all these things, whatever they may be, will soon pass away and no longer exist. Reflect on how you have already changed and will continue to change. The world is in constant flux and life is fleeting.

IV.

Do not be angry with your neighbor for doing what is wrong; remember that we all do wrong at times. Instead, try to understand why they do it and forgive them.

We share a common sense and logic, which makes us all logical: if so, then the basic principles of poets or not-so-logical people are also common; if so, then the law is common; if so, we are citizens; if so, we are part of some state; if so, the world is like a city; for who else could claim that all human beings are part of one state? And from this common city, do we not also share this sense, logic, and law? Just as the solid comes from some earth, the liquid from some other element, the breath from some source, and the heat and cold from some particular source (for nothing comes from nothing, just as nothing goes to nothing), so too the sense comes from somewhere.

V.

Everything we see will soon pass away; nothing stays the same forever. So it is foolish to be attached to anything in this world.

No nature is so hard to overcome as the nature of the universe, its origin and its mystery. Comparing its elements to each other and finding a solution to them. But no one should be disturbed by this: for the living being endowed with reason and the arrangement of the universe are not against him.

VI.

Think of the changes of the world, and the stability of the things that are in it. All things are fleeting and perishable, and the substance of them is a mere dream and vapour.

Remember that you were born to face these things with courage and resolution, not to seek an easy life without difficulty. Remember that in a short time both you and he will be gone, and no trace of either will remain.

VII.

Think of the changes of the world, and the variety of those who have already passed away, and of those who are now living, and of those who will come after.

Be prepared for difficulty, and expect trouble: be prepared for trouble, and difficulty will cease.

VIII.

Think of the changes of the world, and the variety of those who have already perished, and of those who are now living, and of those who are yet to be born.

He does not make himself a man of one thing, nor does he make his life one thing, nor does he blame or praise anyone.

IX.

Think of yourself as dead. You have been deprived of the sense of your own mortality. And the life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living. So think of yourself as dead, and then you will not be impatient with anything that happens.

Be willing to do what is necessary for the common good.

X.

"You have power over your mind - not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength."

You have control over your thoughts, not over external events. Understand this and you will find strength.

Do what is right, and it will be rightly rewarded: not only according to each one's own opinion, but according to what is just and as if it were imposed by someone. Act, then, as if you were under supervision, and whatever you do, do it as if it were the act of a good person, as if you were being watched by the good. This should be the rule for all your actions.

XI.

Everything that happens is natural and necessary. Nothing can happen without a cause. Accept this and you will find peace.

Consider these things: either the world judges you or it calls you to judge it. But in either case, judge it according to truth.

XII.

Think of the changes of the world, and the variety of those who have already perished, and of those who are now living, and of those who are yet to be born.

Think about how the world has changed and how many people have already died, are living now, and will be born in the future.

We should always have two things in mind: to act in accordance with the rules of the political and legal system for the benefit of mankind; and to adjust ourselves to the changes that may come from someone else's initiative, if it is for the better. We should accept such changes only if they come from someone who is wise or beneficial, and remember that the past should only be accepted, not necessarily followed.

XIII.

Think it through. What else do you want besides this, doing what it does?

XIV.

Think of the time you have spent in life as already ended, and as a road that has been travelled. Reflect that it is most unreasonable to be disquieted at anything which happens in such a little time.

Be content with what you were born with. Rejoice in the one who gave it to you: but even more, adapt yourself to his word, the seed of change.

XV.

Think of the life of the good man, and the forms of the gods, and the ruling powers of the universe, and the continuity of matter, and the revolving cycle of the seasons.

Many things have fallen away from his own control: what has already happened and what is yet to come, makes no difference.

XVI.

Remember that everything is only for a short time, both that which remembers and that which is remembered.

God has given us these ten days with the instructions to use them as a test and trial. If we can keep to the rules and show respect for reason, then we will be successful.

XVII.

Think of the time you have spent in the world as but a single day. The part of it that is already past is gone forever, and the present moment is all you have. Make the most of it.

Be content with what you have. The reward is: as long as you live, as long as it is possible, be good.

XVIII.

Remember that all is opinion. Nothing is so afflictive as an opinion.

He should not be concerned with what someone else said or did, but only with what he himself does, to make it just and good according to the good. He should not be distracted by anything else, but stay on the right path, undisturbed.

XIX.

Think of the time you have spent in the world as already ended, and of yourself as a spectator of your own life.

We should not think that each of the things we remember will soon pass away and we ourselves will die. Instead, we should keep in mind that the one who assigned them is still there.

Consider and discard all memories as if they were disjointed and disconnected. What then is this to you? I'm not saying it's nothing to the dead, but to the living, what is the use, except for economy? For now we possess the natural gift of another's words in addition to our own.

XX.

No part of oneself can be called good unless it is also beneficial to oneself. This applies to even the most common of goods, such as tools and crafts. What good is a gem if it is not polished? What good is gold, ivory, purple, bronze, a pearl, an emerald, or a tree if it is not used?

XXI.

If the souls are separated, how can they be brought back from nothingness? How does the air contain the bodies that have been scattered for so long? For just as it makes room for the dead by changing and dispersing its own parts, so too the souls, when they are thrust into the air, are changed and dispersed and taken up into the seed of the universe and provide space for the newly arriving souls. Who could deny this? We must not only consider the number of bodies that have been scattered, but also the number of creatures born each day, both of us and of other animals. For as many as are destroyed and scattered in the bodies of the decaying, and as many as are received by the air through its transformations into fire or air, what is the truth of this? A division into the eternal and the perishable.

XXII.

Do not be impatient, but rather give justice to every claim and check every impulse.

XXIII.

Everything that harmonizes with you is also harmonious with me, like a single universe: nothing should be too early or too late for you. Everything that the passing moments bring me is like a flowing river: all from you, in you, to you. As Kekrops said: "You are not a city, but a world." So, if you want to be content, take only what is necessary and whatever the logic of the natural order requires, and how it requires it. For this not only brings contentment, but also takes only a little. Most of what we say and do is not necessary if someone is wise, and will be more relaxed and untroubled. Therefore, we must also be careful.

Remember to remind yourself: don't be so focused on what is not necessary. Instead, not only should you practice what is necessary, but also use your imagination. That way, you won't be so easily distracted.

XXV.

Reflect on how you can live your life in harmony with the universe and the way of the good person, accepting what comes from the heavens and dealing with it justly and wisely.

XXVI.

Do not be disturbed. Strengthen yourself. Who is wronging you? Yourself. What have you been given? Use it well. From all that has been given to you, take the beginning and make it your own. In general, live a short life, but one that is full of glory and justice. Do not be afraid.

XXVII.

The world is either a well-arranged system or chaos. But not the world: rather, it is possible for there to be a world within you, and yet for all things to be without order and disconnected and conflicting.

XXVIII.

Darkness, noise, confusion, fear, tumult, childishness, foolishness, madness, tyranny - all these are bad.

XXIX.

If the universe had no knowledge of the things in it, it would not be a universe and the one who does not know what is happening would not exist. Flee from the political talk: be deaf to the clamor of the ignorant: be poor in possessions but rich in purpose: be a separate part of the universe, not part of the common exchange of words, by refusing to join in the sympathy of those who are like them. That is true freedom.

Take this away, which has also been given to you: a detachment from your own soul, of the logical disjunctions.

XXX.

"I have no art to retain the lessons I learn, and I am unable to keep up with the words," said one. But I have the food of the teachings and I remember them."

XXXI.

Let the skill you have acquired be your guide: leave the rest of life's journey to the gods, and look to yourself for all that is needed, without relying on anyone else, not even a friend.

XXXII.

Reflect on the times of Emperor Otho, seeing the same things happening - people marrying, raising children, getting sick, dying, going to war, celebrating festivals, travelling, farming, trading, governing, making laws, sending some to their death, talking about the present, asking questions, desiring kingships and empires - and yet his life was no different. Then think of the times of Emperor Trajan - the same things again. His life was the same. Consider the other eras and nations and how quickly they passed away and were reduced to nothing. Most of all, remember that each turn of the wheel has its own speed and symmetry - so don't be surprised if you don't move forward, or even backwards, in your quest for the better.

XXXIII.

Now you have recalled the past with words: so it is.

Many of the names of the ancient famous people are now just words, such as Callimachus, Cassius, Oollesus, Dentatus, and only a few like Scipio, Cato, Augustus, and Adrianus and Antoninus. All these have quickly faded away and been forgotten. I say this about those who are admired, for the rest are soon forgotten. What is truly admirable? Nothing at all. What then should one strive for? To have a sound mind, just actions, and social behavior, never giving up, and a disposition that is ready for anything that is necessary, useful, or based on reason and principle.

XXXIV.

Give yourself up to the guidance of the common reason of mankind, as you may find it in the ordinary opinions of life.

XXXV.

Every day, remember to keep in mind both what you remember and what you are remembering.

XXXVI.

Understand that all things change and that nothing stays the same.

Nature has a certain pattern of its own, but you only throw things down to the ground or into the sea, and this is a single, isolated act.

XXXVII.

Do not be too ready to trust or to admire the teachers of morality; nor be too ready to distrust or to despise them. Do not expect perfection from them, nor be too ready to censure them.

XXXVIII.

Look at their ruling principles and the wise ones, some of whom flee from fame, and some seek it.

XXXIX.

Do not let the ruling power of another lead you astray, nor let it shape your behavior in any way. Where then is the harm? Wherever you find yourself being drawn away from what is right. So don't be drawn away and keep everything in its proper place. And with respect to the body, remember that it is a vessel, to be kept under control, cared for, and used, but never to be a source of confusion. That is, don't think of it as either bad or good, since it can be used for either. For the same person can be used for both good and bad purposes.

XL.

Think of the world as a single living being, with a single soul and a single body. Consider how it is connected and how it moves towards harmony and unity. Think of how everything is related and how all things work together to form one whole. Consider the unity and order of the universe.

XLI.

Be content with what you have, like a dead man who can't be given anything more.

XLII.

There is nothing bad in the things that change, nor anything good in the things that stay the same.

XLIII.

All of creation is like a river, ever changing and ever flowing. Each thing comes into being and then passes away, to be replaced by something new.

XLIV.

All things are changeable, just like a river and a flame in a fire: like this.

Fear and pain and insult and compulsion, and all that disturbs the minds of men.

XLV.

It is fitting that each thing should be in accordance with its predecessor: for there is not a kind of confusion and disorder, but a kind of harmony and agreement in the way things are arranged. So, things that come into being do not follow a random pattern, but show a certain kind of orderliness.

XLVI.

Remember the words of Hercules: that the earth produces death and the air produces life, and air is pure and life-giving. Remember also the revolving cycle, to which everything returns: and how, as it were, with a certain regularity, the same things happen to all of us; and how those who today are in high spirits will tomorrow be no more; and that we should do and say what is fitting, for even then we shall be no more. And that we should not be like children, playing now this way and now that.

XLVII.

If a god said to you, "Choose either a quick death or a long one," don't think it's a great choice. For what difference is there between them? In the same way, there is no great difference between a long life and a short one.

XLVIII.

Many doctors have prescribed me many treatments, many mathematicians have spoken of death as something great, many philosophers have discussed death or immortality in great detail, many rulers have killed many people, and many tyrants have treated people as if they were already dead with their cruel orders. Many cities too.

Say this to yourself: Elis, Pompeii, Herculaneum and other cities are gone. What was once alive is now dead. Everything changes and is quickly gone - like a dream or a flash of lightning. The only thing that remains the same is time, which marches on and sweeps away all things, as if they were a leaf that falls from a tree, showing us the vanity of all things and the joy of living in the present.

XLIX.

Compare yourself to an acorn, which falls to the ground and is content with its fate. I, however, am not content with my fate, yet I am not distressed by it either. It is possible for everyone to accept their fate, but not everyone can do it. So why should I be upset rather than content? Do you think it is a sign of weakness for a human not to accept their fate? Is it not a sign of weakness to not follow one's own will? What then? I have willed it - so why should I not accept it with joy, being great-souled, wise, brave, free, unhindered, and content with what fate has given me? Remember this in all things that come your way.

Use this doctrine: not that this is a misfortune, but to bear it as a good fortune.

L.

Think of yourself as mortal and of the short time you have to live, as a mere moment. What can those do for you, or the famous people of the past? They are all gone, Kadikianos, Fabius, Julianus, Lepidus, or whoever else was famous. All of them are gone, and the gap between them and us is small and quickly passed. So why worry? Look at the vastness of eternity and the whole of time, what difference does a three-day festival make?

LI.

Always act according to nature, in a way that is consistent with the highest standards. For this kind of disposition will prevent quarrels and disputes, and all kinds of mismanagement and disorder.

BOOK V

I.

When I consider that I am about to do something related to a human being, what difficulty can I find in going out to do what the nature of the universe has prescribed and what is appropriate to the kindness of the world? Or should I keep myself in a corner, curled up in a ball? No, this is not necessary. So, should I go out to do something with gentleness or with action? Do you not see the ants, the spiders, the bees, the serpents, the doves?

After you have formed the world, do you still want to do human things? Do you not follow the natural order? Instead, you should rest and relax. I say: Nature has given us the capacity to measure and the natural order has given us the ability to eat and drink, but you should go beyond these limits, not in quantity, but in quality. For you do not love yourself, since you do not even love the natural order and your own will. But those who love their crafts are devoted to their work and are content: let the musician honor music, the sculptor sculpture, the commander command, the money-maker money-making, and the farmer farming. And when they try, they don't want to eat or sleep more than necessary, but they are different in that respect. But for you, social activities seem to be more pleasant and require less effort?

II.

Be content to be free from all imagination and to be always ready for all that happens, or to be like a rock, unmoved in any circumstance.

III.

Judge yourself for all your words and actions according to their nature, and don't let external things distract you or make you lose your composure. Others have their own opinions and judgments, but don't let that bother you. Keep your own inner peace.

Follow nature, both your own and that of the universe, but keep a balance between the two.

IV.

I move according to nature, until I rest in it. From it I breathe out, and into it I return, from which my father gave me the seed and my mother the blood and the nourishment. From it I take every day this form and this life, and I am carried along and drawn back to it.

V.

Do not let your mind be troubled by things you cannot control: stand firm, but accept other things that you cannot say anything about. For you cannot do anything about them. So accept what comes to you, all that is within your power, such as the uncontrollable, the inevitable, the changeable, the unfeeling, the unknown, the limited, the harmonious, the free, the perishable, the unfeeling. How much have you already accepted without resentment, of which not even a hint of complaint or discontent has escaped you? Or do you still grumble, complain, groan, bemoan, and be angry with the present, and wish for something else, and be vexed and disturbed and full of grief? Do not do this, but rather, as far as possible, accept all these things as from the gods, and at the same time, if you can, do so quickly and with as little distraction as possible. And do not forget this: do not be overwhelmed by the present, nor give in to it.

VI.

What is it to me when someone else is happy or unhappy, if I myself am content? It is not my concern, but rather I should be content with myself.

We should understand that even what has been done can be undone. But what has been done by one's character cannot be undone, it is like a mark burned into a tree, and nothing else can be done to it except to accept it as it is. A horse can be broken in, a bee can make honey, a man can do what he wants, but he cannot change what he has done, just like a tree cannot change the mark burned into it. So we should accept what has been done by our character.

Yes, this should be accepted: that it is natural for us to feel part of the community, to act in a communal way, and to want what is best for the community. What you say is true, but what I am saying now is this: because of this, we should be like those who have gone before us, for they have been guided by reason. And if you want to understand what I am saying, don't be afraid, don't let this stop you from doing something for the community.

VII.

O Zeus, O Zeus, be gracious to Athens and its people. Therefore, there should be no fear or anxiety about it in a broad and free way.

VIII.

Whatever is said, that Asclepius should give this person relief, joy, or freedom, the same applies to the nature of all things, such as disease, fear, or loss, or anything else of the sort. For there, the term 'relief' means to act towards this person as is fitting for health, and to adjust each of the components accordingly to what is fitting for the whole. Thus, nature also suggests this.

The experts say that even the four elements must be fitted together in the right way in the figures or in the paintings. For the whole universe is like a single body made up of all its parts, and in the same way this harmonious arrangement of all the parts makes up the universe.

We should also consider the end and purpose of each thing: for example, it has been given to this thing. So this has been given to it and fitted to it; let us accept it then as it has been fitted by Nature. There are many details and intricacies in these matters, but let us keep our eyes on the goal of health.

What kind of summary and conclusion of the common nature do you think of, such as health, and thus embrace all that happens, and accept it with serenity, since you are here to promote the health of the universe and the well-being and harmony of God. For nothing has been given to any single thing, unless it has been given to the whole; for the universal nature does not give anything to any single thing, which is not in harmony with the rest.

Therefore, you should act in two ways: first, that it has happened to you and been fitted to you and has come to you in the way it has; and secondly, that it is for the sake of the universal well-being and harmony and the divine order and unity of the whole that each single thing has its own proper purpose. For the whole is held together, if the bond and continuity of the parts is preserved, as in a living creature; and so it is with the parts: separate them, as far as you can, when you are disturbed, and set some of them aside.

IX.

Don't be afraid to fail or to be embarrassed, if you are following the right principles in everything you do. Instead, take it up again and be determined, if most of it is more human and kind, and if it is in your power to do so. Don't approach philosophy like a teacher, but like someone looking at a painting or a statue, or like someone admiring a tapestry or a statue. For this way you won't be showing off your words, but rather humbling yourself. Remember that philosophy only wants what your nature wants: but you wanted something else, not according to nature. What is more beautiful than this? Does pleasure not come from this? But to admire greatness, freedom, simplicity, understanding, integrity - what is more beautiful than this, when the most perfect and beautiful thing is found in every branch of knowledge and science?

X.

Things are arranged in such a way that it is not only difficult for philosophers to teach everyone that all things are uncertain, but even for the Stoics it seems hard to accept: and all our investigation is disturbed. For where is the unshaken one? He who holds to the things laid down as being but a short time and quickly passing away and liable to change into a child or a woman or a fool. After this he speaks of the agreement of those who are associated together, which is hard to dissolve, I won't say impossible. In such a body and in such a brief duration of life and so much changeableness of the substance and of time, what is there that is not a matter of doubt?

I do not think it is possible to estimate or always strive for what is done or what is happening. Instead, I must keep my natural impulse in check and not be disturbed by the discussion, but only be guided by these two principles: that nothing should be done contrary to the universal nature, and that nothing should be done without due consideration of the gods and spirits. No one is forced to do this.

XI.

Why do I still cling to life now? I should constantly remind myself of what this thing is that I am clinging to, which people call life, and what I have of life now - no children, no young people, no wife, no ruler, no wealth, no power.

XII.

Many things appear to be good to the majority, but are not truly good. For if someone were to consider what is truly good, such as wisdom, temperance, justice, courage, they would not listen to those who proclaim these things as good. But since these things appear to be good to the majority, they are accepted as properly chosen by those who hear them. Similarly, the majority have a false notion of the difference between them: they do not reject and avoid this, but rather admire and approve of wealth and honours as something noble and worthy of praise. So it is necessary to ask and consider whether these things, which appear to be good, are really worthy of honour and truly good.

Be content with what you have been given by fortune and don't have any further desires.

XIII.

I have set up death and change as two things that will never be taken away, just as nothing can be taken away from what does not exist. Therefore, all of my parts will be rearranged into different parts of the universe, and then those parts will be rearranged into other parts of the universe, and so on forever. In this way, I and those born with me are all connected to an infinite cycle. For the universe is not destroyed in this way, but is governed in cycles.

XIV.

We have the power to direct our own thoughts and actions. They start from our own principles and lead to the desired outcome. These processes are called orderly because they show the right path.

XV.

No one of these things is proper to man, but to a man, as being a man; nor is it becoming for him to be carried away by them. Neither is it the part of a man to be affected by them, or the nature of man to be perfected by them. Neither is the end of these things in man, nor the complement of the end, which is the good. For if any of these things had been proper to man, it would not have been either to be elated by them, or to be humbled by them, or to give himself up to them, or to be in any way affected by them as if they were good. But now, if a man shall apply himself to these things, or to such like, or shall be in any way attached to them, he is much the more a good man.

XVI.

Think this way: your mind is being washed by these thoughts. So be baptized by this continuous flow of such thoughts: that wherever you are, there you will be living; and that in a hall, you will be living in a hall. And again, that whatever each thing is ordered to do, it is ordered to this end: the end it is ordered to, is in that thing itself. And where the end is, there is also the fitting and the good of each thing. The good of the rational creature is social life. For it has long been made clear that we are born for cooperation; or was it not clear that the left hand should help the right, and the weak the strong? The strong should help the weak with their strength, and the wise with their wisdom.

XVII.

To accept the things we cannot change: not to try to do something impossible.

XVIII.

It is no shame to accept what cannot be changed, or to show great composure when it is accepted, and remain steadfast and unshaken. It is a great sign of strength to be able to accept things.

XIX.

These things cannot be changed by our will, nor can we find an exit to our will, nor can we move or turn our will, but it can move and turn itself, and it can choose what it wants, and do what it decides.

XX.

In another way, it is most natural for us to do what we can and accept what we cannot change. But when some things come to our homes, it is something we must do.

People are not the same as the sun, wind, or sea. But something can obstruct my activity, and no obstacle can be created by lack of preparation or care. For understanding and readiness can make everything that precedes the action and is connected to it effective and ready for the action itself.

XXI.

The greatest thing in the world is to be mindful of what is common to all. Similarly, the greatest thing in yourself is to be mindful of what is common to everyone else. For what is common to all is also within you, and your life is governed by this.

XXII.

The city does not blame, nor does the ruler blame it. For every thought of blaming, set this rule: if the city does not blame me, I will not blame it; if the city blames, I will not be angry, but show what the city has done wrong.

XXIII.

We should have a great respect for the order and connection of things, and their dependence on each other. For example, the existence of a river is in a continuous flow and its energy in constant change, and the causes in various combinations and the end in an infinite series. How can one not be amazed and awestruck by all this?

XXIV.

Remember the brevity of life, of which you have only a short time to live.

And of the whole eternity, a mere moment is assigned to you, and the boundless space of the present, of which a small part is given to you.

XXV.

Someone else may blame me; let them: I have my own judgement and action. Now I have what the common nature wills me to have, and I do what my own nature wills me to do.

XXVI.

Do not compare yourself to others, but observe and limit their actions in your mind. When their actions come into your thoughts, do not oppose them with anger, but rather accept them as natural. Respect the gods who constantly show you their power. Each person has their own mind and reason. What can you do to someone who has a harsh mouth or a harsh temper? They have such a mouth and such flaws, and it is natural for them to act this way. Remember that you too have a mind and reason, so act with logic and understanding. If you do, you will heal without needing to be angry.

Neither tragedy nor comedy.

XXIX.

I should accept whatever happens as necessary and inevitable, and thus keep a calm spirit. What else can I do? Until something of this sort happens, I remain free and no one can force me to do anything against my will. I should act in accordance with reason and in harmony with society.

XXX.

He reflected on how the mind of the universe is social, and how the parts of it are harmoniously connected to each other. He considered how it gives and takes away from each other in turn, and how it brings rulers into harmony with each other.

XXXI.

Praise yourself for having done right by gods, parents, siblings, wives, children, teachers, benefactors, friends, household, and all others. Never say or do anything bad about anyone. Remember how you have strived and succeeded, and how your life's story is now complete. How many good deeds have you done, how many pleasures and pains have you endured, how many gifts have you given, and how many honorable people have you known?

XXXII.

Why do craftsmen and unskilled workers have different souls? What is the soul of the skilled worker and the wise person? It is the beginning and end of knowledge, and a comprehensive understanding of the whole of existence, arranged in a logical order and governing all of time.

XXXIII.

No matter how much wealth or fame you have, you are still just a skeleton and a name.

Remember your name and the name of the good. The things in life that are numerous, great, small, and fleeting, like children's toys, laughing, then quickly crying - faith, kindness, justice, and truth towards Olympus from a divine source. What then should you keep, if the tangible things are unstable and the intangible things are hidden and hard to come by, and the joyousness of the soul is fleeting? What then? Wait for either its destruction or transformation. Until that time comes, what is there to do? What else but to revere the gods and praise them, and to do good to people and attach yourself to them and be attached by them? And whatever is within the power of your body and soul, remember that, neither when present nor when absent.

XXXIV.

Always strive to be better, even if it means enduring hardship and suffering. These two things are common to the nature of God and of man, and of every living creature: not to be hindered by anyone else, and to follow the right path and do what is good, and to keep one's own share of the world in order.

If neither evil nor activity against evil is present, why should I be disturbed, and who is to blame for the common lot?

XXXVI.

Don't let my imagination overpower me, but help me with strength and courage to face what comes my way. Don't let fear take over me, for that would be wrong. Instead, I should strive to be like the brave man who faces danger with courage.

Remember that you are mortal, so act accordingly. Since you were born for a purpose, ask yourself what it was. Was it not to be a good person? So be one. Were you not born to be free? So be free. Were you not born to do good? So do good. Have a good purpose and carry it out with dignity.

BOOK VI

I.

All things exist in a state of harmony and order, and the reason that governs them has no cause within itself to do wrong; for it has no evil in it and does nothing wrong or harmful. Everything happens and passes away according to it.

II.

Don't be concerned with being more powerful than rulers or more eloquent than speakers, more able to endure pain than the strong, or more knowledgeable than the wise. For one of the two basic activities of life is to avoid what we should avoid. So it is enough to be on guard in this area.

III.

Be still: don't let anything disturb you, neither your own opinion nor that of others.

IV.

Everything that is changeable will soon be changed and destroyed, if its nature is only temporary or fleeting.

V.

This is how a ruler should conduct himself, what he should do and to whom he should show kindness.

VI.

The best way to avoid being unhappy is not to expect too much.

VII.

Change your perspective and turn from the activity of the common life to the activity of a common mind directed to God.

VIII.

It is the mark of a ruler to be self-controlled and to act only in ways that are fitting, and to make of oneself whatever one wishes, while appearing to be whatever is appropriate.

IX.

Everything passes away according to its nature: for nothing can stay in the same state, but is ever receiving or losing something, or being changed in some other way.

X.

If I have the first things, why should I also desire to have a reputation and form, and to be in such a way? What else should I wish for, or from whom should I ever expect it? What should I be troubled about? For I have the power to do what I do. If there is anything else, I should revere and be content with the one who governs.

XI.

When you are forced to be disturbed by external things, quickly turn to yourself and don't let the disturbance control you. If you had a father and mother, show them respect and keep your relationship with your mother in harmony. This is now your task and philosophy: often turn to it and cling to it, so that what is yours will appear to you and you will be in control. For example, take the opinion of death as something trivial and not worth worrying about.

The dead bird or hare: and again, that the Falernian wine is stored in a jar and the flesh of a pig is mixed with its blood; and that in the interior of the body there is a certain tension and a certain contraction of the muscles: these are the images which are formed in our minds of these things, and which are separated from them, so that we can say at any time what each of them is: thus one should always act in life, and wherever one imagines something impossible, one should reject it and fix one's attention on the reality and the history from which it is indicated. For it is a difficult task to be a sophist and when you think you are doing something clever, you are often mistaken. So what does Critias say about Cenocrates?

XIV.

Most things, which the multitude admire, can be reduced to general categories such as liquids, solids, plants, trees, and vines. Those of a more refined nature can be divided into those of natural origin, such as animals, and those of artificial origin, such as works of art. But none of these can compare to the rational and social nature of humans. We should protect and nurture our own rational and social nature, and work together with our fellow humans.

XV.

We should act quickly and do what needs to be done, and accept what has already been done. Changes and alterations are constantly renewing the world, just as an endless flow of new time is always being provided. What value can anyone place on any of these passing things? It's impossible to stand in the same place. Just like someone trying to hold onto a passing stream of water with their hands, what has already gone by is out of sight. The same is true for our lives: like breathing in air and exhaling it, we take in and let go of the same breath. So it is with the power of breathing that sustains us all, which we must take in and then let go of when the time comes.

XVI.

Don't strive to breathe like a fish or to take on a shape according to your imagination, nor to be changed or transformed. This is like trying to answer the demands of food. So what is a fish? Not even to be covered by a shell. So don't be covered by words either. Let go of the ornament too. What is a fish? Let me show you how to move and act according to your own nature, and the care and skills that come with it. For every art aims at this, that the thing made should be suitable for the purpose for which it is made; the shipbuilder and the vine-dresser, the ploughman and the sower.

Seek this as your reward. What do the teachers and trainers aim for? Surely not fame and this kind of thing, nor any of the other external things. Do you not seek many other rewards? So you should not be either elated or depressed: for it is necessary to accept what is given, to be content with it, to cheerfully accept the powers that are assigned to you, and to offer to those who have the power to reward you what is due. In general, it is necessary to accept what is given, and to add something of your own, and to remember the gods. But the proper use of your own faculty of reason, and the proper attitude towards yourself and your fellow humans, and towards the gods, is to accept what is given and to make the best of it.

XVII.

Turn around, look within yourself, and you will find in yourself nothing but a regulating impulse, which is superior to any of the external impressions, and which is more divine and more free.

XVIII.

People don't want to be praised by those who live with them and in their own time, but they want to be praised by those who come after them, whom they have never seen or known. It is easy to be discouraged by this, that even your ancestors were praised by others.

XIX.

If something is beyond your control, don't think it's impossible for a human being to bear it, but if it's something within your power, then accept it and make it your own.

XX.

We did not show any resentment or give way to anger when we were struck in the gymnasium or insulted, or had our head struck; instead, we bore it calmly, not as if we were wronged, nor out of ambition.

Let us be content with what we have and live our life accordingly. We should avoid many of the things we strive for. As I said, it is enough to turn away and not pursue or reject them.

XXI.

If someone accuses me of not taking care or acting properly, I can accept it cheerfully. For I seek the truth, which no one has ever escaped, while the one who ignores his own faults and ignorance is blamed.

XXII.

I do my own thing, not worrying about the rest: for these are either pointless or irrational or out of my control and not understanding the order of things.

XXIII.

Treat animals, plants, and inanimate objects with great respect and freedom, and treat people with kindness and social courtesy. Also, always remember to give thanks to God. Don't be too concerned with how long it takes to do these things. Even a few moments are enough.

XXIV.

Alexander the Great and his companion died and were laid to rest in the same way: they were returned to the same elements of the universe or dissolved into atoms.

XXV.

We should not be surprised if our life is short, for all that is born in this world of ours is short-lived. So do not be amazed if all that exists in this universe of ours is fleeting.

XXVI.

What is the proper way to write Antoninus' name, so that each of us may remember it?

What then is to be done? Nothing to be angry or resentful about; nothing to be disdained or despised. Remember that all is composed of numbers. So, keep in mind that everything is made up of these numbers and don't be disturbed or put off by those who oppose or contradict you.

XXVII.

Don't let people get away with treating their own things and those of others carelessly. Don't let them do it even if they don't get punished, since they still do wrong. So, teach them and show them not to be careless.

XXVIII.

Set aside vain ambition, lack of self-control, and foolish opinions, and devote yourself to the service of the world.

XXIX.

It is easy to keep your body in good health, if you take care not to let it be deprived of its natural rest.

XXX.

Don't be discouraged or give up: it can be done. Make yourself simple, good, imperturbable, dignified, honest, sympathetic to what is right, religious, generous, and devoted to the common good. Aim to be like this, and you will be a philosopher. Respect the gods, love people. Live a brief life: be a bright spark that flashes and is gone, and a helpful, useful one. Be like Antoninus' pupil: with respect to the things that come to you according to the nature of the universe, be ready to accept them with a simple and contented mind, with a sense of mercy towards those who wrong you, with moderation in all things, and a readiness to let go of everything. Don't be too eager for anything, or too quick to get it.

Meditate and reflect on yourself and remember that your dreams are fleeting. Look at them again with determination, as you did before, without being swayed by them. Act quickly and don't be tempted by evil. Be careful and precise in your actions and words, and don't be boastful, arrogant, or a sophist. Be content with little, such as a house, clothing, food, and service. Be frugal and patient. Remain in the same place until the end, without changing your opinion due to the passing of time. Be consistent and kind in your relationships. Accept criticism of your ideas with humor and be pleased when someone suggests something better. Be reverent without superstition. Thus, when your last hour comes, look at it as you did at the others. Reflect on yourself and remember that your dreams are fleeting. Look at them again with determination, as you did before.

XXXII.

I am a body and a soul. Therefore, nothing is indifferent to the body, for nothing can be separated from it. But to the soul, nothing is indifferent except what is not its own action. And of these, it only considers the present; for the future and past actions of the soul are already indifferent.

XXIII.

There is no pain to the hand or foot unless one makes the foot suffer and the hand feel. So there is no pain to a person as a person, unless one makes them suffer.

Man has no power. If he has no power over himself, then he has no evil either.

XXXIV.

They have sent you gifts, pleasures, relatives, rulers.

XXXV.

The builders of ships are not so concerned with their own reputation that they will not abandon their craft until it pleases the individual owners, nor do they fail to stand by the principles of their art and refuse to abandon them; nor is it any more remarkable that the architect and the doctor should adhere to the principles of their own art than that a man should adhere to his own principles in relation to the gods.

XXXVI.

Realize that the universe is a single great thing, embracing all things within itself. See the whole of time as a single moment, all things small and fleeting. Everything comes from the same source and returns to it. See the beauty and ugliness of the world as one. Don't think of them as separate, but recognize their common origin.

XXXVII.

Now I see that all things come from the same source, both what is peculiar to each individual and what is common to all, for all are of the same kind and have the same origin.

XXXVIII.

All things in the world are interconnected and interdependent. Everything is linked to each other in some way, and all things are connected to each other through harmony, rhythm, and the unity of nature.

XXXIX.

Be kind to those who have wronged you and show friendship to those you have wronged. Truly forgive them.

XL.

We have an instrument, a tool, a vessel for everything that can be put to use. And the power to use it lies within the vessel itself. We should therefore pay attention to it and think of it as something that can be used, if we have the right attitude and understanding. It has this power for everyone.

What is good or bad for us, we must accept with courage and without complaint. We often blame others for our own misfortunes. But if we judge only what is in our power, no one can be blamed. We will not need to accuse either God or man.

XLII.

We should all work together, some of us consciously and with awareness, and some unconsciously, like those who are asleep. As Heraclitus said, we are all co-workers in the universe. Each one contributes in their own way, from preservation to challenging and changing what exists. That is how the universe is designed. So let us all take our place in it.

You should use your powers to manage and direct all things as part of a larger whole, but not in the way a comic actor does in a play, as Xanthippe remembers in the play.

XLIII.

What does the sun do differently than the rain? What does Asclepius do differently than Chiron? What does each star do differently? There is a difference, but they all work together towards the same goal.

XLIV.

If the gods had been planning something good for me, they would have planned it well. Why would they want to harm me for no reason? What benefit would it bring them or the world? If they had not planned something specifically for me, they would have at least planned something for the world in general, which I should accept and be grateful for. If they are not planning anything for anyone, then I should plan for myself and be mindful of the one who is looking out for me. Everyone should act according to their own nature and purpose, and mine is to be rational and just. My city is Rome, as it was for Antoninus, and my world is the universe, as it is for all people. These are the only good things I have in my city.

XLV.

Everyone should do what is right, and this will benefit all.

Take this in. Still, there's something that applies to every person, and to other people too. Now, it's more common to take a sympathetic attitude towards the middle ground.

XLVI.

Think of the things in the universe and in such places as always being the same, and that the same God is always taking care of them. Live your life with this in mind: everything is the same, and comes from the same source. How long will it last?

XLVII.

Think constantly of all people and all nations, with their different customs and laws, so that you may be able to look upon the world as one family. What else can we consider? Here we find powerful rulers, wise philosophers, Hercules, Pythagoras, Socrates, heroes of old, and modern generals, tyrants, and statesmen. Among them are Eudoxus, Hipparchus, Archimedes, and other famous people, great minds, lovers of truth, and lovers of justice who have opposed the wicked and defended the good. What is so remarkable about all of them? What can those who are not even named do? In a short time, truth and justice will prevail over wickedness and injustice.

XLVIII.

When you are feeling overwhelmed, remember the roles of those around you: the doer, the sufferer, the one who benefits, and so on. Don't be overwhelmed by the similarities between them, as if they were all competing against each other. Instead, look at them separately and calmly.

XLIX.

Don't be dismayed at the amount of words you have written - it's not three hundred. In the same way, don't be dismayed at the amount of life you have - it's not more than what is allotted to you. Just as the nature of your being is determined by what is given to you, so too is the length of your life.

L.

Think to yourself: challenge them, but also listen, when the argument for justice is like this. If someone is attacking you, move to a more noble and gentle attitude, and remember that it comes from a lack of self-control and that the strong don't do it. So what kind of attitude should you have? This kind. And take away from it: whatever we have agreed upon, this is what will happen.

LI.

My friend encourages me to have my own independent and good will, my beloved encourages me to have my own opinion, and my mind encourages me to have my own action.

LII.

Do not let yourself be overwhelmed or enslaved by your thoughts.
These things have no power over our decisions.

LIII.

Be content with yourself in comparison to the common lot of humanity, and as if you were saying in your heart, "Behold, how much more content I am than I could have expected."

LIV.

Do not be angry with those who seem to be against you, nor yet with those who seem to be friendly.

LV.

If the sailors were governing badly or the doctors treating ill, what else could he do to help those in need or to bring healing to the sick?

LVI.

Once you came into the world, you should already be ready to leave.

LVII.

What should I be angry about? Is it reasonable to be angry with the person who is sneezing or the person who is shivering?

LVIII.

No one will hinder you from living according to your own reason; no one will oppose you in living according to the common reason.

LIX.

Those who wish to pursue the path of virtue should look to what is essential and to the actions that follow from it. As quickly as possible, embrace all that life has to offer and whatever it has already taken away.

BOOK VII

I.

What is bad? You have seen this many times. And always remember that this is something you have seen many times. Everywhere you look, you will find the same things: old stories, myths, fables. Now you will find cities and households. Nothing new: everything is connected and short-lived.

II.

The teachings can be changed in any way, as long as our imagination does not deceive us. I can accept this: if I can, why should I be disturbed? Nothing in my understanding is contrary to my understanding. This is true and right.

It has been given to you to live: see, then, to it that you live in a way worthy of the life you have been given.

III.

Let us be content with little, and bear in mind that dramas, poems, angels, and the like, are mere shows, and that elaborate banquets, and the like, are but a sort of disease, and processions with a great show of torches but a kind of vagrancy, and gorgeous garments but a kind of beguilement. Let us therefore be content with these things, and not be over-ambitious of them, but consider that each of them is worth just so much as the worth of that which is about them.

IV.

We should pay attention to what is said and done, and in each case consider what the purpose or reference is, and in the other case, understand what is meant.

V.

My thought should be directed to this: can I do it, or not? If I can, I should put my whole effort into it, as one appointed by the universal nature to do so. If I cannot, I should turn to the power which appoints me to do what I can. Otherwise, I should not be dissatisfied with what is beyond my power, but should accept it willingly and do what I can to make it useful to the common good. Whatever I do, I should do it with all my heart, for the common good and for the benefit of all.

VI.

Those who have already become very famous have been given their due, and those who remember them long ago have already been forgotten.

VII.

Do not rely on help: you have the power to act as a soldier in a siege. What then, if you are only able to move forward without being hindered by anyone else? Have you no power over this?

VIII.

Don't be disturbed by what is about to happen: you will have it in your power to deal with it.

Be content, saying this to yourself now in view of present things.

IX.

Everything is interconnected and the divine order is one, and nothing is alien to anything else: for all things are bound together and the same world embraces them. For there is one universe made up of all things and one God who is over all things, and one substance, one law, one common reason of all rational beings, and one truth, and one perfection of all like things that share the same reason.

X.

Everything is connected to the essence of the universe in the most orderly way, and all causes lead back to the universal reason in an orderly manner. Everything is remembered in an orderly way by eternity.

XI.

"Logic is a tool for distinguishing truth from falsehood, and for speaking correctly."

XII.

"Be orderly, and don't be disorderly."

XIII.

It is in our power to have the best parts of the body in good order, with a view to their harmonious cooperation. But the thought should be often repeated to yourself, that you are a part of a logical system. And if you consider yourself to be a part of the universe, you will no longer be angry with your fellow humans; you will no longer be discontented with your circumstances; you will no longer be proud of yourself; you will act with kindness and justice.

XIV.

Say to yourself that you will accept the pain as a part of life. If you do, you can endure it without complaining. But if you think it's bad, you will be disturbed. Don't think it's bad.

XV.

Whatever anyone does or says, I must be good. As if a gold, or emerald, or purple stone were to say: Whatever anyone does or says, I must be an emerald and keep my own color.

XVI.

The ruler should not be angry with itself, that is, it should not fear falling into vice. If someone else can make it afraid or grieve, let them do so. For it does not lead itself to such paths. Do not let the body suffer, take care of it if you can, and say to it if it is in pain. But the thing that is feared, grieved, and generally disturbed by these things, do not let it suffer. For you cannot bring it into such a crisis. It is enough for the ruler to do what is in its power, unless it brings harm to itself. In this way, it should be untroubled and undisturbed, unless it disturbs and troubles itself.

XVII.

Happiness is a good and ruling good. So what are you doing, imagination? Receive the gods as you came: I do not use you. You have come according to the ancient custom. I do not be angry with you: only remember.

XVIII.

Fear change; for what can come into being without change, and what can be better or more fitting to nature? You can free yourself if you do not change the essential part of yourself; and you can change if you do not change the essential part of what is around you. What else of the things you use can be brought into being without change? So do not be surprised that you too must change in accordance with the nature of things.

XIX.

All bodies are connected to the universe, like parts of a single organism, and interact with each other like the parts of a living being. How many Chrysippuses, Socratics, and Epicuruses have already passed away. Let this thought be a reminder to you of the fleeting nature of life and all things.

XX.

Do not be disturbed by the changes in the world, but rather do what the nature of man requires, not what it desires or what it is accustomed to.

XXI.

Be aware of the fact that everyone's opinion of you is changeable, but your opinion of everyone else should remain the same.

XXII.

It is fitting for a human to love even those who wrong them. This happens when you remember that even your relatives and those without knowledge often do wrong, and that you have been treated with little injustice, and above all, that no one has wronged you.

XXIII.

He compared himself to a man who started from a small spark and gradually increased it until it became a fire, then a flame, then a torch, and then finally a blazing conflagration. He realized he could not go back to being a spark, just as he could not return to being good.

XXIV.

Keep your face set towards the changes and alterations you experience in life, so that you may never be overwhelmed by them or give in to them. Accompanying this should be the thought that nothing is entirely new; it is just a transformation of what already exists.

And what will be the consequence of failing to act rightly? What will be the outcome of it?

XXV.

Everything that exists is in a constant state of change, being transformed by nature and creating new forms from its own essence, so that the universe remains ever new.

XXVI.

When someone does something wrong to you, consider whether you can respond with something good or bad. Don't be angry or resentful. Instead, think of how you can respond with something good or similar. If you can't think of anything good or bad to respond with, just be silent.

XXVII.

Don't think of things that are absent as if they were present, but rather choose the best of what is present and remember how it was when it was here, in case it is no longer here. So don't be too attached to them, as if you were estimating them as permanent, so that you don't get upset if they are ever gone.

XXVIII.

Be true to yourself: have the courage to do what is right and have the strength to bear the consequences.

XXIX.

Let go of your imagination. Control your impulses. Consider the passing of time. Recognize what is appropriate for you or someone else. Divide and share what is given into what is necessary and what is superfluous. Remember the shortness of life. Leave behind whatever wrong you have done, where the mistake was made.

XXX.

Adhere to the rule of thought for the things said. Bring your mind to the things that happen and are done.

XXXI.

Think of yourself with simplicity and modesty, and the difference between good and bad. Love the human race. Follow God. He said that all is ordered, but only the elements are mixed. Remember that all is ordered. It's enough to know a little.

Regarding death: either it's a dispersion, if we are atoms, or a transformation, or a migration.

XXXIII.

Do not be afraid of pain; it can either be endured or relieved. Reason should maintain its own serenity and not be disturbed by pain. Anything that pain can do, it can do either by enduring or by relieving it.

XXXIV.

See their opinions, some of which flee and some attack. And that, just as other animals hide their first movements from each other, so in life the first steps are often concealed by those who come after.

XXXV.

One should have a great sense of pride and wisdom in all of life, in all of existence. So what does it seem to be the human life? Impossible, or at least hard. So what can be more frightening than this for someone like this? Nothing.

XXXVI.

Do what is right, and listen to no one else.

XXXVII.

It is easy to keep one's face composed and arranged in an orderly way, as reason directs, without arranging and adorning it oneself.

XXXVIII.

Do not be angry with those who do wrong: for they do not know what they are doing.

XXXIX.

Give thanks to the gods and be kind to us.

XL.

Be willing to be a beginner every single morning and to keep on learning and never assume you have it all figured out.

XLI.

If I had been created by gods and had been their child, I would have reason and this too.

XLII.

I must be just and fair to myself.

XLIII.

Do not be resentful, do not be angry.

XLIV.

I must admit that it is not right for you to say, as a human being, that it is a good thing to bring a child into the world or to beget one, even if it brings some small benefit, without considering whether it will act justly or unjustly, or do good or bad deeds.

XLV.

Athenians have a saying, that is true: whoever seeks to be the best, or to rule, must always be prepared to face danger, not counting death or anything else as too severe a price to pay for honour.

XLVI.

Do not seek for anything else than to do what is right and be good, for this alone is the way to live a long and truly human life, trusting in God and believing in the laws of nature that the appointed time of death cannot be escaped. Consider what is the best way to live this life.

XLVII.

Consider the changes of the elements, as if they were passing by, and think of their constant transformation into different forms: for these imaginations will keep the spirit of life's brevity.

XLVIII.

Marcus Aurelius advises to observe the words of Plato and to look at the realities of life, such as hunting, military service, farming, games, conversations, births, deaths, courtrooms, boundaries of countries, different cultures of barbarians, festivals, funerals, markets, the harmony of the universe, and the order of the opposing forces.

XLIX.

Reflect on changing the things that have gone before, and the many transformations of ruling powers. Even the present is a thing of the past: for all things flow and nothing remains the same. So it is with the forty-year span of human life: what more is there to say? And what has come from the earth will return to the earth.

The sun, rising again into the heavens, brought light to the things in our souls that were in darkness and this separation of the elements of pain.

LI.

Be content with what you have and drink and eat cheerfully, so as not to die in sorrow. For it is necessary to follow God's will with calm and untroubled mind.

LII.

Be more considerate than generous, not sociable but ready to help, not ostentatious in giving to those who ask, nor yet unseasonably remiss.

LIII.

Wherever it is possible to do something beneficial for both gods and humans, there is no difficulty. Wherever there is a way to bring about kindness and order through proper action, there is no fault.

LIV.

Be mindful and show reverence towards yourself and the present moment. Be gracious and treat others with justice. Show kindness and respect to the present moment, so that nothing inappropriate happens.

LV.

Don't be overwhelmed by other people's power, but look at what your nature directs you to do, both in terms of what happens to you and in terms of your actions.

Live according to your own nature: shape each part of yourself according to its own nature. And shape the rest of your logic in the same way, as you would shape any other part of the universe, and the logic of others in the same way. The first part of human nature is social, the second is to resist physical impulses. Set limits to your own logical and intellectual movements, never allowing them to be swayed by either physical or emotional impulses. For these two are in opposition, and the intellect must be in control and not be overpowered by them. This is just, for all of them should be subject to it. The third part of logic is to be independent and unchangeable. So, having set aside these, pursue the ruling principle within yourself.

LVI.

Whatever has been accomplished and endured until now, to live the rest of life according to nature.

LVII.

To love only what is in accordance with one's own nature and is harmonious: for what is more pleasant?

LVIII.

Think of each thing in life as if it were already gone: those who were here before us are now gone, and those who will come after us will also be gone soon. Where are they now? You too will be gone soon. So why do you cling to things that are not yours? Instead, focus on how you can use them to become a better person. Be kind and generous, and remember that you and everyone else are on a journey.

LIX.

Let go of the source of good and always be ready to give it up, if it is for the better.

LX.

Let your body be trained to endure and not be disturbed either in motion or at rest. For just as the mind, when it is intent on a particular object, is undisturbed, so too should the whole body be trained to be unmoved. All these things should be done with a sense of calmness.

LXI.

Be moderate in comparison to the athlete, not to the spectator, when facing what comes unexpectedly and cannot be foreseen.

LXII.

Be willing to understand what kind of people they are, and what power they have over you, for they do not influence your ears or your belief by flattery, but look to the paths of obedience and submission.

LXIII.

Therefore, be just and temperate and brave and free, and look upon all these qualities as necessary to you. But most of all, remember to keep in mind what follows: that it is more important to act in accordance with these qualities than to merely possess them.

LXIV.

Remember that in the face of all hardships, it is not unmanly or weak to maintain the ruling reason: neither is it contrary to logic or to social norms. In the face of most hardships, let the example of Epicurus help you, that they are neither unending nor eternal, if you remember and do not expect them to last forever. But remember also that many hardships, though the same, are lightened by being borne with patience: such as being deprived of something or suffering pain or being dishonored.

When something unpleasant happens, tell yourself, "I can endure it."

LXV.

Never have such an attitude towards other people as people have towards each other.

LXVI.

What would we have gained, if Socrates had accepted the popular opinion and been more accommodating to the sophists in his discussions, more submissive in his manner, and had recommended the Salaminian to go away more gently and had yielded more in his words? Would anyone have been any the wiser for that? No, we must look to see what sort of a soul Socrates had, and whether he was able to remain true to justice in his dealings with men and piety in his dealings with the gods, without being overcome by evil, or becoming a slave to anyone, or showing any lack of respect to those who were deprived of their rights, or being too lenient in punishing the wrongdoer.

LXVII.

Remember always that it is not enough to be content with not being blamed, but you must strive to be worthy of praise and to do things that are your own. For it is a mark of a divine man to be content with himself and to be known by no one. Remember this and also that it is enough to live happily in a few things and not to seek to be skilled in rhetoric and philosophy, so that you may be free and unhindered and reverent and social and friendly to God.

LXVIII.

Be content with a modest life in a humble place, and let everyone else bow down to you. Let the noise of the world's business be like the music of a flute in the distance. What use is it to have a mind full of ideas and a judgment that is true and useful for the things that come before it, so that you can say to the one who presents it: this is what you have in terms of nature and in terms of the opinion of others? And to the one who opposes it: you are being sought out. For my part, I always have the same desire for a logical and political life, and for the art of living as a human or a god. For everything that is beneficial is the same for a god or a human, neither new nor strange, but familiar and useful.

LXIX.

This is the perfection of character, to live every day as if it were your last, without fear, without regret, and without pretense.

LXX.

The gods, being eternal, do not begrudge that in this world they should always have such and so many faults attached to them. And yet they are still praised by all. But you, who can hardly say anything without fault, should you not be more sparing, and even of these faults, only a few?

LXXI.

I should be content with my own misfortunes and not flee from them, since it is possible, but flee from those of others, since it is impossible.

LXXII.

No reasoning or social power can judge itself fairly; it is always biased.

LXXIII.

Once you have done what you ought and another has done wrong,

Seek out what three things, like the fates, are guiding you; either to do something or to endure something.

LXXIV.

No one is ever harmed by doing good, but only by not doing it. So no one is ever harmed by being good, in which lies goodness.

LXXV.

The universe is governed by a single plan, and all that happens follows a certain order. It is best to remember this and act accordingly, rather than do anything rash or extraordinary.

BOOK VIII

I.

This brings us to the conclusion that it is not possible to live life or become a philosopher from scratch, but that one must become familiar with philosophy through many others and oneself. Therefore, do not seek any other delight than that of the philosopher, but strive and compete with yourself. If you truly seek what is right, accept what you know and be brave enough to do what life requires of you. Understand what it requires and nothing else should distract you. Do not waste time on what has been said, thought, or written, or on pleasure. Where then is the thing? It is in doing what human nature requires. How then do you do these things? If you have principles from which you can form opinions and actions. What principles? Those concerning good and bad, so that no one can do anything wrong, wise, brave, free, or bad that is contrary to these principles.

II.

Ask yourself: How am I doing? Don't be distracted by anything else. I'm small and temporary, so what else should I be striving for if I'm doing my part in a rational, social, and just way?

III.

Alexander, Gaius, and Pompeius - what did they do compared to Diogenes, Heraclitus, and Socrates? They saw the things and their causes and their laws, and they had their own power. But those others had wisdom and service to many.

IV.

No one else will do the same things, and you will be gone soon.

V.

Don't be disturbed first of all: for all things pass away according to the nature of the universe, and in a short time no one will remember, just as no one remembers Adrianus or Augustus. Then, having looked into the matter and reminded yourself that it is necessary to be a good man and what the nature of man requires, say this to yourself and act as seems right to you: with modesty, and without pretense, and without hypocrisy.

VI.

Everything has its purpose, to change what is here to what is there, to move it, to alter it, to take away and bring in something new. Nothing is to be feared, nothing is new; all changes are just the same, only the names are different.

VII.

All nature is content with itself, and nature's rational part is content with its own thoughts, neither deceiving nor being deceived, and applying itself only to its social functions, and its commands and prohibitions directed to our own actions only, and what is taken away by common nature.

Do not be disturbed by the changes in life. Just as the fluid of a river is ever changing, so too is the life of a human. The river's fluid is subject to force and is without reason or justice, while the life of a human is free from force and is rational and just, and is regulated by laws and the division of time. Do not expect everything to be equal, but rather to be different in each case.

VIII.

It is not possible to turn back time, but it is possible to be free from pain and pleasure, to be above the need for reward, and to not be disturbed by the unimportant and undesired.

IX.

Let no one keep you from living a life of serenity and self-control.

X.

Reflection is the practice of considering one's own actions as valuable and beneficial to the good and noble man. No good and noble man should ever think of offering anything to pleasure. Neither valuable nor good things should be offered to pleasure.

XI.

What is this thing in itself and by its own nature? What are its components and its powers? What is it doing in the world? How long does it last?

XII.

When you wake up from sleep, remember that you must act according to your own nature and according to human nature, to do things in a social way, and to be content with what you have.

All things are of one kind and akin to one another, and the particular quality of each is more appropriate and closer and more kindred to it.

XIII.

Think and reflect on all things, whether you should assent, reject, or suspend judgement.

XIV.

Think to yourself: what beliefs does he have about what is good and bad? If he has beliefs about pleasure and pain, and each of the things poets write about, such as glory, disgrace, death, life, then it's nothing remarkable. Or show me something he has written, and I'll remember that he has to do it this way.

XV.

It is necessary to accept that it is a hardship to endure, if the result is happiness, just as it is a hardship to accept what the world brings, and to endure it with a physician or a ruler, if they have acted rightly or wrongly.

XVI.

It is also beneficial to be ready to change and to submit to the one who sets things right: for it is an active energy according to the same rule and judgment and purpose, and according to our own nature, which is ever changing.

XVII.

If you can do something to me, what are you doing? If it's to someone else, what concern is it of mine? Compare yourself to yourself or to the gods. The latter is better. Do nothing out of spite. If you can do something, do it well. If you can't do it, accept it. If you can't accept it, what is the point of being angry? You can't do anything about it anyway.

XVIII.

The universe never changes; it only appears to. It remains the same, but transforms into its individual components, which are the elements of the universe and of us. And these too change, but without confusion.

XIX.

Think of each thing that has happened to you as if it were a fig or an olive tree. What do you marvel at? That the sun rises? That the other gods exist? So why not accept what has happened to you? See if it can be attached to a purpose.

XX.

Let no one ever lose sight of the end and the beginning of their actions, just as the circle has no beginning or end. What good or bad does the circle bring? What good or bad does the joining or separating of the parts bring? The same applies to life.

XXI.

There are exits and entrances for souls, some are born, some die, some sin, some are punished. There are those who act and those who are acted upon, those who remember and those who are remembered. But in this world, no one agrees with everyone else, and no one agrees with themselves. Everything is fleeting.

XXII.

Consider the beauty of the universe, its order and its energy, and its adaptation to our needs. Remember that you should strive to become better rather than remain the same.

XXIII.

What should I do? Show kindness to other people. What can I offer to the gods in return? I can offer gratitude for all that they have given, from which all things are born.

XXIV.

Whatever is presented to you to accept, accept it as if it were a gift, with grace, modesty, and dignity. Accept all of life's experiences, both good and bad, as part of your journey.

XXV.

Look at the world with kindness, then look again with greater kindness.

Remember these things: Diotimus, Faustinianus, Antoninus. All of them: Celer, Adrianus, Celer. And the others who were either foretellers or inspired - Xanthos, Demetrius the Platonist, Eudaimos, and anyone else like that. All of them, long ago, now dead: some remembered by few, some changed into a song, some already forgotten even in their songs. Remember to keep your judgement free from bias, your spirit untroubled, and to change and be adaptable.

XXVI.

Be content with what is human, and think of other people's points of view. Exercise restraint in your emotions, distinguish between real and imagined things, and keep a clear view of the nature of all things and the events that happen in it.

XXVII.

Three considerations: the first, concerning the nature of the universe; the second, concerning the nature of the divine; from which all things come into being; and the third, concerning those who are united with it.

XXVIII.

Pain is an evil to the body, but we should not give in to it: rather, the soul should maintain its own serenity and calm, not giving in to the fact that it is evil. For every attack, disturbance, and turning away, and separation, has an end, and nothing truly lasts forever.

XXIX.

Think to yourself continuously, saying: Now it is in my power to be undisturbed, not to be troubled by anything, not to be passionate or disturbed in any way, but to look at everything with calmness and serenity. Remember this power of yours.

XXX.

Speak and act in a manner that is appropriate and towards everyone in the world, without being extravagant: use language that is fitting.

XXXI.

Augustus, wife, mother, ancestors, predecessors, siblings, relatives, friends, Areius, Maecenas, doctors, all of them are dead. Then consider the rest... not the death of one person, like Pompey. And remember this inscription for the memorials: "He began his own family, and considered how many of them had suffered, in order to leave a certain succession, then it was necessary for someone of the family to be born again. Again, the death of the whole family.

It is necessary to live one's life in a certain way, and if it provides what is necessary, it is enough. But if it does not provide what is necessary, nothing can be done to make it happen. Instead, one should be content with what is given and be thankful for it, and with the same attitude, one should accept whatever happens, as the discourse says.

XXXIII.

Take it upon yourself to accept, but to let go with ease.

XXXIV.

If ever you find yourself separated from the rest of your body, whether it be a hand, foot, or head, act as if it were not part of you. Do not wish for what is not right, or blame yourself for what has happened. Remember that you have been separated from something that was once part of you. Now you have detached yourself. But take comfort in the fact that you can be reunited with yourself again. This is something no god can take away from you.

He should remember that the purpose of man is to keep returning to the same point, without breaking or interrupting the cycle. He should also remember that he was made to take up the same starting point again and again, and to accept the portion assigned to him.

XXXV.

We can apply the same principle of the logical faculty to all our other faculties. Just as the logical faculty organizes and arranges its own material, so too can the rational creature arrange and use its own faculties. As it is said, "It can make use of itself."

XXXVI.

Don't let your imagination run away with you, don't let it be overwhelmed by the things that might happen or the things that have happened. Instead, focus on what is in front of you: what is the task at hand, and what is within your power? Acknowledge this. Then remind yourself that the future or the past cannot burden you, only the present. And that can be managed, if you keep your mind focused on it and don't let it wander.

XXXVII.

Is it worth worrying about the death of a man like Euphrates or Pergamos? Or the exile of Adrianus or Diotimus? Ridiculous! What if they had worried? Would they have felt better? What if they had felt bad? Would they have been any less dead? Of course not. They would have been dead anyway.

I acknowledged that both young and old must become dead, then what should those dead do afterwards? Everything is but smoke and a dream in a moment of time.

XXXVIII.

If you could see, look at the judgement, say, with understanding. Justice is not part of the structure of the rational animal, but self-control is.

XL.

Put yourself in the place of one who is convinced that you should not be disturbed by what is not in your control, and you will have placed yourself in the safest place. Who is this?—Reason. But I am not reason.—Be reason. Then this reason of yours will not disturb you, if anything else has an adverse effect on you, take it up with itself.

XL1.

Being hindered is a bad form of living. Being forced is also a bad form of living. There is also something else that is both hindering and bad in its nature. So being hindered is a bad form of mental activity.

Bring all these things to yourself. Does pain come to you? Accept it.

Is something blocking your way? If it is something that can be removed without force, do so. If it is something that is generally accepted, don't be angry or hindered. No one else can hinder the workings of your mind: no fire, no iron, no tyrant, no insult can take it away when it is kept in its own seclusion.

XLII.

I am not angry with myself for making mistakes; for I have no control over what happens to me.

XLIII.

Be different from others, but keep the ruling part of yourself free from any person or thing that happens to people, and accept and give to each according to their worth.

XLIV.

Consider this time as your own. Those who criticize you more harshly don't think that others are like you, but that you are like them. What then should you do in response to them? Should you let their words affect you or let their opinion of you be so?

XLV.

Allow me to be changed and moved wherever you wish. For there I have my own guardian spirit, that is, a power that is ready and active according to its own nature. Why then should I be disturbed if my body is changed and my soul is made lower, humbled, constrained, and oppressed? What harm is there in that?

XLVI.

No person can be expected to do anything that is not humanly possible, nor can a bull do what is not bovine, nor a vine what is not vine-like, nor a liquid what is not liquid-like. So why should you be blamed for not doing what is impossible? Nature has not given you an unfair burden.

XLVII.

If something outside of you causes you distress, it is not the thing itself that is causing you distress, but rather your judgement of it. So, it is up to you to change your judgement. Similarly, if something appears to you to be bad for you, why not do something more beneficial instead of being distressed? But take action with more determination.

Do not be discouraged. The blame is not yours for not acting. But it is not right to remain inactive either. So draw strength from the fact that you are part of a larger whole, and that the one who is active is also part of it. Show kindness to those who are discouraged.

XLVIII.

Realize that the ruling part of you is weakened when it turns away from itself and does not do what it intends, and is diverted elsewhere. So what should you do when you have reasoned and considered something? This is the free person's response: no one has a more powerful refuge than not fleeing from oneself. Therefore, don't be unaware of this, and don't flee from yourself without cause.

XLIX.

Don't rely too much on the ideas that come to you. It should be clear that the thing you fear is bad for you. It should also be clear that what you desire is not bad. Look at how a child behaves. Look: it fears what is dangerous, but does not fear what is not. So keep to your initial ideas and don't let yourself be carried away by any new ones, and nothing will happen to you. Be like a rock, unmoved. What happened in the world? It was judged by a human philosopher, just as if it had been judged by a craftsman or a shoemaker, that in the workshop of the universe, the things made and put together were done well. But those who judge it have no power to change it, only to admire the skill of the maker, who has confined and limited everything within its proper bounds and made it beautiful.

It is fitting to be changed often and to make other new beginnings, so that you do not grow tired of your own self and do not put bad things in the same place. Therefore, it is necessary to have a change of place, a change of food, and a change of activity.

LI.

Don't be content with being useful in your actions, or faithful in your relationships, or clever in your thoughts, or restrained in your passions. Seek to be good and wise in all of them. How can you have a single, pure, temperate, just mind if you are pouring in impure, foul, and disorderly thoughts from every quarter? How can you have a steady flow of good if you don't block the bad?

LII.

I don't know what the world is or where it is. I don't know what it was created for or what it is made of. I don't even know what I myself was created for. So what can you expect from someone who is fleeing from a lion or a bear, and doesn't even know where they are going?

LIII.

Think of how you would act towards someone who wrongs you three times in a day. Should you show them kindness even though they don't show it to themselves? Show them kindness by changing your attitude towards them no matter what they do.

LIV.

Do not merely be content with the air that surrounds you, but also be harmonious with the intelligence that pervades all. For the power of intelligence does not depend on any one thing, and it is superior to the power that allows breathing in air.

LV.

No bad thing affects the world as a whole, but only affects the part it touches. It is only to this part that it brings harm and distress, when it is allowed to do so.

LVI.

It is appropriate to our nature to accept the things that are outside of our control, just as it is to accept our own breath and body. For even though we are all parts of a whole, each of us still has our own individual authority. So if something outside of me is bad, it does not follow that it is bad for me, since it does not come from God.

LVII.

The sun appears to set and yet it does not really set. For its setting is an appearance due to our perception: its rays are said to be hidden by the earth coming in between. Consider how, when a house is shut, the light within is hidden, yet the light is not destroyed. In the same way, whatever is blocked from our sight is hidden, but not destroyed.

Live in accordance with nature and follow the guidance of reason. Do not be too eager to discard what you have, but accept it and make the best of it. Do not be too eager to pursue what is beyond your reach, but be content with what you have and make it your own. This will bring you peace of mind.

LVIII.

Fear not the natural thing, for either you will fear feeling or another will. But even if you don't feel, there is no harm in it. Change your way of life and live with fewer things.

LIX.

People have need of each other: teach or be taught.

LX.

Always be ready, always keep your mind open. Even when it is occupied and when it is directed towards a particular thing, it should remain open to anything else.

LXI.

Be content with what is in your power, and accept what is beyond your power.

BOOK IX

I.

Being respectful to the divine order of the universe is the basis of logical living, so that we can avoid wronging each other and instead honor the divine purpose. Pretending to be respectful to the gods is also wrong, since the order of the universe is natural and everything is connected in the right way. Respect is also called truth and is the first cause of all that is true. Therefore, anyone who pretends to be respectful is wrong.

Do what is right: but also consider how it differs from the common practice of people and how it conflicts with the order of the world. For one who acts contrary to truth will be fighting against himself. For it is necessary to submit many times to the common opinion, as if it were a kind of law, in order to distinguish the false from the true. And do not think it is cowardly to submit to the opinion of the many, for it is necessary to follow the general opinion in order to distinguish what is just from what is unjust. And one who fears pain and pleasure, life and death, fame and dishonor, as the common opinion dictates, is not following his own opinion. I say to follow the common opinion in order to agree with what happens, not to submit to it as if it were a law of nature. For it was established by someone, and it has been changed many times, with some things being added and others removed, and with some things being altered.

II.

Be content with being a human, free from deceit.

We should avoid all pretense, hypocrisy, and self-conceit, and be content with what we are. And if we cannot do this, we should at least try to escape from the plague of it, since it is more destructive to the soul than any other disease. For the plague of wild animals is one thing, and that of men another; and the latter is far worse.

III.

Do not fear death, but rather be content with it, as it is part of nature's plan. For example, there is birth and aging, growth and decay, coming together and parting, and the other natural processes that make up life's cycle, such as dissolution. This should be accepted by humans, not blindly or recklessly, but rather calmly, as one of nature's processes. Just as you accept the fact that your wife's womb will eventually release the fetus, you should accept the time when your body will be released from life. If you want a more personal example, think of the things you will have to leave behind when you die, and how you should accept them with composure. It is not only necessary to accept them, but also to let go of them and to bear them in mind with moderation.

Don't let the behavior of others disturb you. This is the only thing you have control over - how you choose to react to situations. Now, take a moment to reflect on how much inner peace you can gain by not being affected by the negativity of others, and saying to yourself:

"Let them be. I will not be disturbed."

IV.

He who wrongs himself wrongs himself; he who does injustice to himself does injustice to himself, and does evil to himself.

V.

Do wrong often, not only what you do.

VI.

Be mindful of the present moment, with its imposed obligations and its social duties and its pleasant dispositions towards all that is in accordance with the tenth virtue.

VII.

Let go of your imagination: keep your composure: accept the present: and have mastery over yourself.

VIII.

If life gives us a thousand physical senses, it gives us a thousand spiritual senses too, just as we say there is one light of all the kinds of vision and one air that we all breathe, both the seen and the unseen.

IX.

Everything that is shared with someone else should be done quickly. All that is solid melts into air; all that is liquid evaporates; and the air itself quickly disperses, so that the things that were done with effort can be used and enjoyed. Fire, too, is a thing that is shared, and it is shared in such a way that it can be used to light up the darkness, so that the light can be seen more clearly. In the same way, all that is shared by nature should be done quickly, or even more quickly, since it is better than all the rest. For example, I have seen plants and animals and newborns and eggs, none of which had any solidity or liquid or any other form. But among the rational creatures, there are friendships and loyalties and households and associations and alliances and reconciliations. And among the higher and more divine things, there is some kind of union, like that of the stars. So, the same principle applies: quickly do what is shared by nature and act in harmony with each other. So, what is happening now? Only the rational things are now being shared, and only the liquid is being looked at, not the solid. But even those who are leaving are still connected: nature binds them. So, let us say this in conclusion: how happy is the one who has no need of anyone else, who is not dependent on any other human being.

X.

We should consider the four elements: man, God, the world, and time. Each has its own place. But if unity is the main thing, then none of these is separate. Reason has both a common and a particular role, and it produces different effects depending on what it is.

XI.

If I could, I would teach you: if not, remember that readiness to be taught is given to you. And the gods too have given you a readiness to help others, for health, wealth, glory, and good fortune. So be useful. You too have this: what is the use of a clay pot?

XII.

Do not act as if you were going to live forever, nor as if you were going to die soon. Just act as a wise person would.

XIII.

Everything has been arranged for the best, rather than everything being left to chance: for there was no randomness, but a purpose in all events.

XIV.

Everything has been tested by me through experience, day by day, and hour by hour; and now I know with certainty what comes from them.

XV.

Things have been set in order by nature, neither revealed nor perceived. What then is revealed about them? Their governing principle.

XVI.

There is no evil in the nature of the rational and social animal, nor any good, but only in its activity.

XVII.

To the clay there is no evil in being moulded, nor any good in not being moulded.

XVIII.

Come back to yourself, and to the ruling part of yourself, and to those fears which you have accepted and those judgments which you have made about yourself.

XIX.

Everything is in flux: even you must change and be transformed in some way, and the whole world too.

XX.

All wrong-doing must be left behind.

XXI.

Consider death as a natural process: nothing bad. Now think of life's stages, like childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. All of these are changes, leading to death. Nothing frightening. Now think of the life of your parents, grandparents, and other ancestors, and all the changes and transitions they experienced. Nothing to be afraid of.

Be bold; in the same way, don't give up your life's purpose and plans too easily.

XXII.

Take care of yourself, the whole world, and this particular thing. Take care of yourself by acting justly; take care of the world by recognizing your place in it; and take care of this particular thing by understanding what it is and that it is related to you.

XXIII.

If your life is part of a larger system, then all your actions should be part of that system too. If your actions don't contribute to the common good, then your life is fragmented and not unified. It's like a part of a city that is disconnected from the rest of the city.

XXIV.

Children's cries and sufferings, and the spirit of the dead being dragged away, so that death may be more clearly seen.

XXV.

Think about the nature of the universe and its relation to the divine, and then consider the time, how much of it has already been spent in this particular way.

XXVI.

Do not be disturbed by the many things that are necessary for the ruling part of you to do. But be content.

XXVII.

When others speak ill of you, look at their faces and see what kind of people they are. Remember that it cannot harm you, no matter what they say. Show them kindness instead, for they are friends, and the gods help all people.

Be content, through understanding, to be turned towards these things, and away from those.

XXVIII.

The universe is like a wheel, spinning up and down forever. Each part of it has its own purpose: accept it or reject it, and the rest will follow. Whether it's atoms or souls, everything is part of a whole, either created by God or self-created. Everything is constantly changing, from one form to another, and back again. We should accept these changes and the order of the universe without questioning it.

XXIX.

Nature gives us all we need. As it is fitting for a philosopher, practice these political matters with moderation. Man, what should you do now that fate requires? Do it, if it is given to you, and don't complain if someone else gets it. Don't hope for Plato's Republic, but be content with the least, and accept its limits. What law can change them? What else can be done but to obey and be content? Now think of Alexander, Philip, and Demetrius of Falera. If you saw them, you'd know what common fate wanted and how they trained themselves. It's plain that the work of philosophy is easy: don't be ambitious for greatness.

XXX.

Think of the countless people who have been in the same situation as you, and the countless ones who will come after you, and those who are now living in foreign lands. Consider those who have already died, and those who are still alive, and those who will soon die. Those who don't even know your name, those who will soon forget it, and those who are praising you now. Remember that your fame and memory will soon be gone, just like everything else.

XXXI.

Be mindful of the consequences of your actions, being just to those who have wronged you. Act with moderation and prudence, as is fitting for a social being.

XXXII.

You have the power to keep all your thoughts in line with your purpose and to maintain a great inner peace by seeing the whole universe as one and understanding the eternity of each moment. Change your perspective from birth to death and from death to birth, as if it were all infinite.

XXXIII.

Everything that is now established will soon change, and the changed will in turn change to something else, and the one who was first will be last, and will return to the same state as the one who was first.

XXXIV.

Consider the rulers of these things and how diligently they work and how they show friendship and honor. Try to look at their minds. When they seem to be blaming or praising, consider what they are thinking.

XXXV.

No change is more necessary than change itself.

Consider the nature of the universe, how everything is ordered and has been since eternity, and will remain so forever. So what do you say, that everything is ordered badly and will always be bad, and that no power has ever been given to change this, but that the universe is bound to remain in perpetual evil?

XXXVI.

Think of each of these things as being like a river: wealth, fame, power, reputations, and even marble and gold and purple and other such things. And think of the soul as something different and changing from these things into these.

XXXVII.

What's the point? What's new about these things? What position have you taken? What's the cause? See that. But the will? See that too. And yet none of these things is necessary, and you can even be more free and useful to the gods. Make it your aim to understand these three things.

XXXVIII.

If I do wrong, there is the wrong. But I do not do wrong.

What if all things come from one source and are all connected like parts of one body? Shouldn't each part care for the whole? Or are they atoms and nothing else but chaos and confusion? What then is to be done? You tell the ruling part: be brave, be free, be disciplined, be suspicious, be harmonious, be joyful.

What if the gods cannot or can do something? If they cannot, what is the use? If they can, why don't they do more?

"Accept that gods have made these things for you, and do not wish for anything else, nor fear anything, nor be desirous of anything. Rather, take what is given and be content with it. Remember that the gods have given these things to you. Then why not use them with freedom and cheerfulness, rather than with servility and dejection? Who told you that the gods do not join with us in these things? Have courage and remember this. One person might say: How can I sleep peacefully? Answer: How can I not wish to sleep peacefully? Another might say: How can I avoid this person? Answer: How can I not be afraid to avoid them? Another might say: How can I not lose my child? Answer: How can I be afraid to lose them? In this way, turn your thoughts away from fear and consider what is happening."

XLI.

The philosopher says that in sickness he did not have the same feelings about his bodily pains as he did before, but rather he reasoned about them and saw that his own good was not affected by them. He also said that he did not need doctors to tell him what to do, but rather his own way of life was enough. So in sickness, he did not give up on philosophy, which had always been his guide.

Do not be disturbed and ungrateful for the common lot of all mankind. Be devoted to the present task and the one in charge of it, through whom you act.

XLII.

When someone wrongs you, remember that it is their nature to do so, just as it is yours to be wronged. Consider what nature has given them to do wrong, and what it has given you to endure it. Nothing new or strange has happened to you; it is your own nature that has been wronged. So, don't be angry with them, but rather be angry with yourself for allowing it to happen. Remind yourself that it is natural for people to do wrong, and that it is your job to forgive them. Don't be surprised or shocked when someone wrongs you; instead, use it as an opportunity to practice patience and understanding.

If you have devoted yourself to this kind of discipline, either to preserve your loyalty or to give your kindness without expecting anything in return, do not expect any reward for it. What else do you want to do for a person? Is it not enough that you have done what is right according to nature, but you also seek a reward for it? Just like the eye expects a reward for seeing, or the feet for walking. Just as these things happen according to their own nature, so too a person who does something kind or helpful in any way should expect nothing in return for it.

BOOK X

I.

Never forget that your body is a part of you, a gift from the gods. Never forget the kindness and strength of its constitution. Never forget its capacity for pleasure and pain, its ability to help or harm others, its capacity for joy or sorrow. Don't be distracted by time, where pleasure can last longer. Don't be distracted by place, climate, or people. Instead, accept your current situation and be content with what the gods have given you.

Live a life of good and just deeds, of beauty and kindness, of creation and connection, of giving and receiving. Could you ever be so united with gods and humans that you neither resent them nor are resentful towards them?

II.

Your nature demands that you act in accordance with your rational and political nature. Do not do anything extraordinary or go beyond what is necessary. Understand what your nature requires of you and, without neglecting anything, fulfill your rational and political duties.

III.

If someone is treating you badly, don't retaliate in kind. If they are treating you well, don't be ungrateful. If they are treating you badly, don't retaliate. Forgiveness will benefit you more. Remember to treat everyone with kindness, as it is noble and generous to do so.

IV.

If it is possible, teach others and show them what you have learned.
If it is not possible, blame yourself or not at all.

V.

Whatever happens to you, remember that the universe has been arranging it for a long time, and this event is a part of the whole cycle of events which is determined by fate.

VI.

If I am either a part or a whole, I must first remember that I am part of the whole, governed by nature; then, that I am a part.

I should remember that I am part of the whole, and accept with joy whatever comes my way. Nothing that happens is bad, since the universe is made up of the same elements, and nothing can happen that is contrary to its nature. So I should accept whatever comes with equanimity, and remember that I am part of the whole. I should do my part in the way that is appropriate to me, and not do anything that is contrary to the common good. As a citizen of the universe, I should live my life as if I were a citizen of a great city, doing whatever is appropriate to me and not doing anything that would harm the city.

VII.

The parts of the universe, whatever is contained in it, must necessarily be subject to change. But let us state this more clearly. If it is bad and necessary for them to change, then it is not good for the parts to be constantly changing into different forms and in different ways. For why did Nature, if it was necessary for these parts to be bad and occasionally to do bad things, make them in such a way that they would be liable to change? Both alternatives are impossible. But if someone objects that these parts are naturally liable to change, and that it is no wonder if they sometimes appear to be in a state of flux, and sometimes to be in a state of rest, he is wrong.

When this discussion has come to these points, each of which is established by a series of arguments, like the transition from the solid to the fluid, or from the animate to the inanimate, so that these too may be included in the general account, either by a continuous process or by certain analogies. And let us not imagine the solid and the animate as having been created from the beginning: for all this has been acquired and on the third day the air received its influence from the surrounding regions. So that what has been acquired may be changed, not what was originally created. Therefore, since it is linked to a particular maker, there is nothing to prevent us from saying what we do now.

VIII.

Think of yourself as having the traits of a good, honest, fair, self-controlled, kind, and generous person. Never change these traits and remember that being fair means having a balanced view of each situation and being self-controlled means having control over your body and not being affected by pleasure, pain, life, death, and other things. If you keep these traits and don't let others define you, you will be a better person and have a better life. It is possible to be like this, and it is a noble and admirable thing to be able to endure and be content in this life, like a brave and noble athlete who is not affected by the wounds and fatigue of the competition.

Get up early in the morning and address yourself with these words: "Let me enter into the short list of those who are wise and just, and remain in that state, as if you were in some sacred place, or in a foreign land. If you feel that you are slipping away and not living up to your ideals, retreat into yourself and take refuge in a corner, where you can be alone and free from all distractions, and simply and freely contemplate the way of life that will make you content. This will help you to remember the names of the wise and just, and not to imitate them, but to be like them in your thoughts and actions, and to be happy with the same things that made them happy, and to be angry with the same things that made them angry, and to be human in the same way they were human."

IX.

Every day, let your thoughts be on the things that are noble, pure, and worthy of respect. Always look and act in a way that will help you to complete your practical tasks and fulfill your intellectual pursuits, and to gain a clear understanding of each thing's nature and its place in the world. When should you be content? When should you be proud? What is the nature of each thing and what is its role in the universe? What is it capable of and what can it give or take away?

X.

People have great pride, some have a sense of honor, some have a sense of shame, some have ambition, some have a sense of justice, some have a sense of courage. For these cannot be taken away, if you examine their opinions.

XI.

Everything changes, so take a rational approach and calmly accept whatever comes your way. Don't take it personally, for no one can control all these external things. Instead, keep your inner self in harmony with itself, and be at peace with the way things are. Don't be concerned with what anyone else says or does, and don't let external events disturb your inner peace. Let go of all your worries and ambitions, and don't let any external force dictate your happiness or your sense of worth.

XII.

We should consider what is necessary to do and do it in harmony with ourselves, changing this situation if needed. If we can't do it in harmony, we should use advice from wise people. If something else stands in our way, we should act according to the current circumstances, in a reasonable way, since it is right to accept what is happening. It is also beneficial and pleasant to be in agreement with the word and to follow it in all things.

XIII.

Think of yourself as having risen from the dead. Would you be willing to put up with the same things you do now, if someone else were in charge of what is right and good? No, you wouldn't. Would you be content to accept that some people are on the couch and others on the floor, some doing this and some that, some coming and some going?

People cheat, steal, and rob, not for money or possessions, but for honor, respect, faithfulness, truth, law, and goodness.

XIV.

The wise and disciplined person says: Give what you want and take what you want. He says this not with resentment, but with acceptance and understanding.

XV.

It is enough to live as on a mountain. For there is no difference there or here, if one lives everywhere as in the world. People have seen and recorded a genuine human being living according to nature. If they don't admire him, they will blame him; for it is better to live this way.

XVI.

Discussing what the good man is must always be done, but it must be done in this way.

XVII.

The seventeenth meditation: Consider the eternity of time and the whole of existence, ever flowing and changing, and that all things are made up of parts, as to their substance, and are dissolved into their parts, as to their duration.

XVIII.

For each of the things presented to our perception, let us be aware that it is already dissolved and in transition, and that it is becoming something else or vanishing entirely, just as it happened before.

XIX.

People are coming and going, laughing and crying, living and dying - all of them living and dying under the control of fate. How few of them are truly free, and how few of them can be content with just a little! How few of them will be content with what they have in such circumstances.

XX.

Each person should bear what is their own, and then all will be well.

XXI.

I say to the world: you are connected to me. But not in the sense that it should be said, "Do you want this to happen?"

XXII.

Be content with what you have and have already achieved. Either go on and do this, or accept it and move on. Nothing else matters. So be at peace.

XXIII.

You should always remember that this field and everything in it is the same, whether it's on a mountain, by the sea, or wherever you want. You can find Plato's words here: "I am in a circle, surrounded by boundaries and barriers."

XXIV.

What is my ruling part and what should I do with it? What am I doing now and what should I be doing for it? Is it empty of thought? Is it disconnected and without community? Is it added on and detached from the body, so that it can be separated from it?

XXV.

The ruler should not be feared, but rather the law and the one who breaks it. No one should be disturbed or upset by what is appointed by the one who governs all things, as it is the law. So, one should not fear, be upset, or be angry with the ruler.

XXVI.

Take away the fear of change and accept the new situation, acting and completing it quickly. For example, replace food with something else and accept the new taste, smell, and all the other things that come with it. Consider these changes as natural and view your power as not just in your eyes, but in your understanding.

XXVII.

Reflect on how all things that now exist, and have existed before, and will exist in the future, are like a play or a spectacle. Consider how all the emperors, kings, and rulers of the past, such as Alexander, Cyrus, and others, were just like actors in a play.
Everything was just a show.

XXVIII.

Imagine all things that are subject to change as like a river flowing or a flame burning, or a cloud shifting or a phantom fading. Similarly, our life is only a moment in the course of eternity. Our ability to understand what is happening and to accept it with reason is given to us alone, while the ability to endure all that happens is necessary for everyone.

XXIX.

Do each of the things you do with determination, as if it were the last thing you were doing in life, for death is frightening.

XXX.

When you come across someone's wrongdoing, immediately compare yourself to them: for example, that you are not as good as they are in making money, or enjoying pleasure, or in being honored and respected. This will quickly calm your anger, reminding yourself that they are acting out of weakness: what else can they do? Or, if you can, help the person who is acting out.

XXXI.

I see a wise man, imagine him as happy or content, and I see a good man, imagine him as fortunate or successful, and I imagine an honorable man with a crown, and I see a critic or a slanderer, and imagine a ruler of the Caesars, and the same for each of them. Then ask yourself: where are they now? Nowhere or nowhere. For in this way, human smoke and nothingness will always be remembered, that nothing in this fleeting time will ever stay the same. What then is to be done? What else do you need to spread this little world around you accurately and thoughtfully? Remain, until you make yourself and these things like a well-tuned lyre, like a bright fire, whatever you put in it, it will sparkle and rise up.

XXXII.

Don't let anyone tell you that you are not simple or good, but rather deceive yourself. Ask yourself: who is qualified to judge me as good or bad? You alone can decide that. Don't live unless it is with this thought: no one has the right to judge you.

XXXIII.

What is the best thing that this universe can do, to act or to say? For what is it capable of doing or saying, and not just seeming to do so? Should I not first consider this, that it is better to do or say something than to do nothing?

It is for those who are devoted to the truth to do the work of the human constitution: for it is necessary to let go of all that is contrary to one's own nature. Everyone has their own nature. Therefore, a wheel does not have the same motion as water, fire, or any of the other things that are subject to different laws of motion. There are many things that are set in motion and established. But reason, through all of them, is able to move in the way it wants and desires. Having set this firm foundation, there is no need to seek anything else: the rest are accessories of the body, or external aids to the use of reason, which neither harm nor benefit it. So, even if something bad happens to one, it is not to be blamed on the other parts of the constitution, or on fate, or on anything else. Remember that it is neither the city nor the law that does wrong, but rather the person who misuses them. And if one uses them rightly, one becomes a better and more perfect person. In general, remember that the law does not wrong anyone, neither the city nor the individual. And none of these noble institutions wrongs anyone. The law does not wrong anyone, nor does the city, nor the individual.

XXXIV.

Set yourself in accordance with the true principles of nature and the most important thing to remember is to stay in the middle.

Fear and dread, like winds that blow, can be calmed. Your possessions and your children can be taken away, and those that come against you can be hostile or indifferent or flattering. All these things are like a gust of wind. Then the wind dies down, and another comes in its place. But the common, eternal thing remains, which is to be content with what is allotted to you and to make the best of it.

And to turn your gaze away from all that is not your own, and to direct it towards what is eternal.

XXXV.

When you look at something, look at it with an impartial eye and don't say, "I want this." For that is the way of the person with a wandering eye. And when you listen to something, listen with an impartial ear and don't be quick to judge. And when you eat, eat with moderation and don't say, "I want this," or "I want that," but rather, "I will take what is necessary." And when you think, think with moderation and don't be quick to judge what others do.

XXXVI.

No one is so content that they won't be disturbed by those who don't approve of what is right. He was wise and sensible: he didn't say, "When will I be free of this teacher?" He wasn't harsh with us, but he made us aware that we were being tested. So remember these things when you are dealing with him.

Think of how much else there is, from which we can draw upon to improve ourselves. Remember to be content with what you have, thinking: I come from a life where I achieved so much, I was praised, I was respected, and now they want me to go somewhere else, hoping for some other reward. What then should I be concerned about in this long journey? Not to begrudge them, but to maintain my own character, being friendly, kind, and gentle. Don't leave as if you are being pushed away, but as if you were gently releasing yourself from the body, like a vapor. For this is how nature has joined us together, but now it is time to part. I part as from my own, not with reluctance, but with willingness, for I was also part of nature.

XXXVII.

Think of yourself in relation to all things, asking yourself what kind of part you play in them. Examine yourself and seek the answer from within.

XXXVIII.

Remember that the power to remain calm is within you: there is your strength, your peace, and, if you like, your humanity. Never let the external things distract you and these bodily organs that are so easily disturbed. They are like a river, constantly changing. Since it is no less beneficial to be free from the passions of the body than from the distractions of the external world, or from the enticements of pleasure and the fear of pain.

BOOK XI

I.

Think of the power of reason: it can order itself, arrange itself, and do whatever it wants, producing its own fruits, like the fruits of the earth and the analogous products of animals. It follows its own course, wherever life's journey takes it, not like a puppet show or a play, where the whole performance is made up of disconnected parts, but with a unity and consistency of its own, so that you can say: I have done my part. And it extends its view to the whole universe, to the void, to its structure, to its endlessness, to its periodic renewal of all things, and it sees that nothing new or alien has been or will be added to the sum of things, but only a certain order and arrangement of the same things, as if one were to take a single number, however great, and add to it another number of the same size. And it has its own sense of justice and fairness and kindness, and it does not prefer itself to others, but it follows its own law and measure.

Think of the power of order, discipline, and self-control, if you can keep your voice in each of its tones and your thoughts in each of their categories, and the same for order and discipline, and for self-control. In short, with no prejudice and no partiality, remember to divide and distribute each thing according to its nature.

Set yourself to be indifferent to all that happens, and to accept it all as part of life.

III.

The right thing to do is to accept the body and treat it with respect. This should be done not out of superstition, like the Christians, but with reason and moderation, and so that it can serve us well.

IV.

I have done my part in a social way: so I am content. Let this always be present to my mind, and never be forgotten.

V.

What is your art? To be good. How is this achieved? Through practice of the rules of the universe and the formation of one's own character.

VI.

At first, the tragic poets taught us to remember the events that happened and why they happened in this way. And not to be too impressed by the grandeur of the stage: remember that these events will pass away and even the actors will be gone. For example, one of the playwrights said something like this: "If I were to be born from the gods and a child of the gods, I would have this to say: and again: do not be too proud of your accomplishments; and to live modestly, like a garland of wild flowers; and such things. After the tragedy, the old comedy followed, full of teaching and mockery.

Remember to keep in mind this serenity when you remember: what was the purpose of Diogenes and the rest of the new school of thought? How much of their work was devoted to the art of living? What useful things have been said by them that we can still learn from? What was the overall aim of their work and writing?

VII.

Being so disposed, it is not difficult to turn to philosophy in this way, in which you are now engaged.

VIII.

A broken chain cannot be joined again, nor can the whole course of life be recalled. So too, a person who has broken off from the society of others cannot be restored to the same position. But another chain can be formed: a person can separate himself from his surroundings and stand apart, and recognize that he himself has also broken away from the whole political system. So God has given us this gift of a common bond: we can again join with those who are near us, and again become part of the whole. But it is difficult to maintain the separation that is made in this way, and to keep the two parts apart. It is not like a chain that has been pulled apart and then, after the break, can be easily reunited, as the smiths say. Be united, not divided.

IX.

Those who are in agreement with you should be met with the proper response.

If you cannot turn away from your duty, then do not let their ingratitude affect you, but remain equally disposed to both, not only in your actions and duty, but also in your attitude towards those who wrong you or act unjustly. For it is a sign of strength to be able to bear with them, as it is to turn away from your duty and to be undisturbed by the wrongs done to you. Both are equally praiseworthy.

X.

There is no art of chance, for the arts imitate chance. If this is so, chance cannot be excluded from the art of living wisely. All the arts of the wise make use of chance: so does the art of living. And though the beginning of it is right, the rest of it is made up of things that are not right, for justice will not be maintained if we deviate from the middle or become too lenient or too severe.

XI.

If things don't happen as you wish and you are troubled by them, remember that the universe is only acting in a way that is natural and nothing is happening to you that is beyond what nature allows. Remain calm and accept what is happening without resistance or fleeing.

XII.

When the soul is free from passions and is not disturbed by external influences, it can contemplate the truth and the common nature of all things.

XIII.

Resist my impulses. I will remain mindful.

I should not be surprised if something I say or do is met with disapproval. Let it be. But I should be ready to show the same thing in its proper light, not in a boastful or self-satisfied way, but naturally and usefully, like the man in the story, unless it is inappropriate. For

I must remember that these things are seen and judged by the gods, and that I should not be distressed by anything that happens, nor take it ill that I am not exempt from the common lot of humanity.

What harm is there in doing what is proper to my own nature and accepting what is now the nature of the whole, as a man who is part of the whole and who does his part in helping it along?

XIV.

Those who despise each other mutually respect each other, and those who want to rule over each other mutually submit to each other.

XV.

The one who says, "I offer myself to you completely," what should he do? He should show it in his actions. His voice should have the same tone, his expression should be the same in all situations, like someone in love who knows everything about the beloved. He should be simple and good, like a statue, so that whoever approaches him will feel compelled to come near, whether they want to or not. Self-control is a sign of greatness. There is no need to be ostentatious: this is the least of all things. The good, simple, and gentle person has these qualities and does not lack them.

XVI.

The best thing is to have strength of character in the soul, so that one can endure whatever comes.

Deal with each of them differently. Consider each one carefully and remember that nothing they do affects us, but they may cause us distress. We are the ones who create our own judgments and opinions about them. So don't write anything down, and if you make a mistake, be sure to correct it. Life is short and soon it will be gone. What else is there to worry about? If it's in our nature, be happy for them and be glad. But if it's against our nature, look for what is in our nature and focus on that, and accept it. Everyone should seek their own good.

XVII.

Everyone has been changed and each of them has been placed in a different situation and will be changed again. Nothing bad will happen.

XVIII.

First, consider what connection I have with them and how we were formed from one another and joined together like a flock of sheep or a herd of cattle. Then reflect that the atoms, or whatever else it is that makes up the universe, have no perception of what is good or bad. Next, think of those who are seated at the same table with you, and how they are doing the same things as you, and yet none of them is aware of it. Finally, if they are doing these things rightly, why should you be distressed?

If you are not careful, you will be both heard and seen. For every soul hears, as it were, the truth, and offers itself to each one according to his worth. People are blamed for listening and not knowing, for being greedy and covetous of what belongs to others. Fourth, that you yourself have done many wrongs and another is like you. And if you have committed any wrongs, you have the power to make amends, even if it is through weakness or ignorance or something bad of the same kind. Fifth, that you should not be angry with those who do wrong: many things happen according to economy, and it is necessary to learn many things beforehand, in order to be able to speak correctly about the actions of others. Sixth, that when you are angry or disturbed, the life of a man is not governed by reason and with very little we are all upset. Seventh, that their actions do not harm us: they are in their own power. But our judgements are in our own power. So take away the judgement and the anger will cease. How then shall we not be angry? Consider that it is not manly, for if it were not bad to be overcome by anger, it would be necessary to do wrong and be a slave and be subject to all. Eighth, that the organs and instruments which are employed in such cases are more serviceable than those which are employed in other cases. Ninth, that the man who is subject to fear, if he is wise, will not be ashamed. For what will the man who insults you do to you?

He should show himself kindly and gently, and, if it is possible, with a kind of cheerfulness, and not be ready to transfer his own bad temper to others, especially not to a child. (My child, let us not be angry with each other. I will not be angry, and you must not be either.) And to show that this is so, that no one can make him angry or vex him, not even those who are trying to do so. He should not be angry or resentful, but should be gentle and ready to forgive, and not as if he were in a school, nor that anyone else should be afraid of him, but only himself, and if anyone else is present, he should be ashamed.

Remember the two heads of which I spoke, that of the giver and that of the receiver, and how both must be free from passion. It is the part of a master to keep his temper in giving and receiving, for both are open to blame. It is a mark of a man to accept the one and to reject the other with moderation, and to be neither troubled nor elated. As with pain, so with anger: both are destructive if they are too intense.

If you wish, take a tenth of the precepts of Musonius and remember that it is not right to be angry with the wrongdoer, but rather to pity him. It is a sign of strength to be gentle with others and not to be angry with yourself. It is a mark of wisdom and power.

XIX.

Remember the many ways in which the ruler's guard is kept.

Say to yourself that this is an illusion, this social agreement, and that you don't have to say it to yourself in moments of distress. There is a fourth thing too, to remind yourself that this is something that is subject to change and is governed by a higher and more divine law, the law of the body and its movements or impulses.

XX.

Your spirit and all that is within you should be in harmony with the order of the universe, and submit to it willingly. Likewise, all that is outside of you should be in harmony with your inner self and stand firm. Thus, all elements should obey the laws of the universe, since you are part of it. Should your inner self not be in agreement with it and resist it? Nothing can last forever, only what is in accordance with its nature. So, when something is opposed to the ruling power, it will leave its place. For it should strive for goodness and piety, not for justice. These are the foundations of harmony and the messengers of the just laws.

XXI.

The goal of life is always the same, but it cannot be achieved in its entirety. It is not enough to just state it, you must also add what it takes to reach this goal. Just like not all good things are seen as the same by the majority, the same goes for the goal - it must be seen as a common and political one. The one who abandons all individual forms and acts in a similar way will always be the same.

XXII.

Be content with what you have and the place you live in, and the fate that comes with it.

XXIII.

Call a spade a spade and the opinions of the many foolishness, like the playthings of children.

XXIV.

The Lacedaemonians set up in their thoughts a shade of darkness over the good things they had, but they themselves did not enjoy them.

XXV.

Consider the thought that you should not be angry with the wrongdoer: that you should not be hurt by him, but rather pity him.

XXVI.

In the writings of the Epicureans there was a command to constantly remember the old ways of living with respect.

XXVII.

Let us imagine ourselves looking up to the heavens, remembering those who always act the same way and perform their own work with order, purity, and self-control. There is no room for complaint against them.

XXVIII.

When Socrates saw the statue of the goddess Fortune, when it was brought in, he said to his companions, "Let us be of good cheer and take courage, for when I saw him thus established, I rejoiced."

XXIX.

In writing and reflecting, don't begin until you have first taken hold of yourself. This is even more important in life.

XXX.

Be a good servant and don't give me any trouble.

XXXI.

Let go of your attachment to what is not in your control.

XXXII.

People act foolishly, thinking they can control the future.

XXXIII.

Seek not excessive admiration: such as a child would seek, when nothing is given to him.

XXXIV.

Epictetus said, when he saw a child weeping, "There is no need to be disturbed. There is no great harm in a child crying." He then added, "Do not be disturbed by changes, either in the way of life or in the way of death."

XXXVI.

No one is forced to do anything against their will: not even Epicurus.

XXXVII.

Advise yourself to be careful when dealing with people and to be gentle in your approach, so that you don't make mistakes, be sociable, be humble, and stay away from everyone. Don't rely on anyone who isn't with us.

XXXVIII.

Therefore, the contest is not about winning, but about persevering or not.

XXXIX.

The philosopher said: Do you want to have rational or irrational desires?—Rational.—What kind of rational desires? Good or bad?—Good.—What then do you seek?—What we have.—What then should we choose and distinguish?

BOOK XII

I.

All those things, which come and go in a cycle, have the power to come into being, if you do not resist them. This means to let go of the past and to accept the future with the will of fate, and to only focus on the present with justice and fairness. Justice, to accept what has been given to you, for nature has given it to you; fairness, to act and speak in accordance with the law and with integrity; do not be hindered by any external evil, or by fear, or by any sound or sensation of the body. For all of that is fleeting. So, whenever you face something unexpected, let go of all else and focus on your inner power and the divine within you, and do not fear death, but rather, be a human being who is ready to leave this world, as if you were only visiting for a day, and then returning home.

II.

God governs all things, both the great and the small, with justice.

For he alone has the power to direct the things he has created towards their intended purpose. If you too can accept this, you will be content.

Do your best to free yourself from the many distractions: consider how you have been given the power to manage the things around you, your home, your possessions, and this kind of display and show.

III.

You should take care of three things: the body, the breath, and the mind. You should do this in order to fulfill your duty. Separate yourself from what others do, say, or think, and from what you have done or said, and from what may disturb or harm your body or breath, and from whatever may distract your mind from its own clear power, so that you can live in harmony with the universe and do what is right and what is in accordance with nature, and say what is true.

Separate yourself, as Empedocles said, like a sphere around a wheel, and live only what is your own, that is, the present. Make sure to use the time you have until you die wisely and peacefully, and live in harmony with your own spirit.

IV.

We should love ourselves more than anyone else, but with a humble attitude towards ourselves. If God or a wise teacher were to command us, we should not even love ourselves for our own sake.

We should think and understand that nothing is too small to be noticed, and not postpone it for another day. So we should pay more attention to what people think of us, or to ourselves.

V.

The gods gave us only one thing: the sense of justice among people and a reverence for the divine, expressed through symbols and many rituals and sacrifices. But if they had the power, would they have allowed injustice to exist? Marcus Aurelius said no, and argued that if the gods were just and fair, they would not have allowed it. So we should not accuse them of something they did not do. We should accept that this is part of the order of the universe.

VI.

Consider and accept whatever happens to you. For even the left hand is just as useful as the right when it comes to untying knots or holding a ruler.

VII.

We should accept death and the body and the soul with composure; the shortness of life; the feebleness of the senses and the mind's weakness; the instability of all earthly things.

VIII.

Consider the benefits of being a good person: the consequences of your actions, pain, pleasure, death, fame, and what you owe yourself in terms of effort. Remember that no one can stop you from doing what is right. Everything is within your power.

IX.

It is necessary to have moderation in the use of doctrines, not only single-mindedness. For the opinion can be adopted and rejected, but the hand is always ready and cannot be replaced by anything else.

X.

Consider these things, dividing them into classes, causes, and relations.

XI.

A person should do nothing else but what God wills and accept whatever God sends. Have this in your nature.

XII.

Do not be angry with the gods: for they do not wrong either by acting or by omitting to act. Nor with men: for they cannot do anything that is not subject to the same law. So you should not be angry with anyone.

XIII.

I am content and serene, recognizing the nature of the things that happen in life.

XIV.

If obedience is necessary and unavoidable, what do you oppose to it? If reason is required to make it bearable, make use of the help from God. If a form of authority is imposed, remember that you have within yourself a ruling power, and give to the authority only your body, your breath, and such things. For the mind cannot be forced.

XV.

Until the light of the sun fades away, it shows and does not hide the height. But will truth and justice and self-control be present in you?

XVI.

If you have done something wrong, what do you know that can make up for it? And if you have done wrong, what can you do?

Take care of yourself and be similar to breaking a statue of yourself. For why should one not do wrong, just like one would not want to feel pain when stepping on thorns or have a horse whipped or whatever else is necessary? What pleasure is there in having such a disposition? So if it is hard, treat it kindly.

XVII.

If it's not true, don't say it; if it's not right, don't do it.

XVIII.

Think of your mind as always facing outward, asking what is this thing that is making an impression on it and breaking it down into its components, its causes, its material, its time, and the place in which it is happening.

XIX.

Have you ever noticed something divine and superior in yourself, among the things you do and the thoughts that come to you? What is my thought now? Fear? Anxiety? Desire? Anything else like that?

XX.

First, don't be dismissive or make assumptions. Second, don't do anything else or focus on social goals instead of the task at hand.

XXI.

No one of those things you now see will remain the same, for all things change and are transformed, and pass away to make room for other things.

XXII.

When you want to let go of something, do it with the same calmness and steadiness with which you accept it. Let go of everything and keep your composure.

XXIII.

Do not let any activity or inaction, no matter how small, escape your notice, nor let it pass without being regulated by time.

Think of this as a system of actions, like life itself, that can be interrupted without any harm. It's not wrong to take a break from this system when needed. Nature and fate give us time and place, sometimes our own, but always part of the whole, where the ever-changing world is held together by a single harmony. Everything is always good and fitting for the whole. So, taking a break from life is not bad, as it is neither harsh nor unfair, but rather beneficial and fitting for the whole. In this way, the one who follows this is pleasing to God and in accordance with wisdom.

XXIV.

Be mindful of these three things: what you do, if it is not right, neither to be seen nor heard of; and of those who are present, that they may not have just cause of blame or of offence; and of yourself, that you may not be disappointed in the performance of what you have undertaken. Secondly, consider the consequences of all actions, from the birth of a man to the end of his life, and from the beginning of a thing to the end of it; and what is the nature of the thing itself, and what is the end of it. Thirdly, if you ever do anything, let it be done in a composed manner, and with due consideration; and let not any perturbation or distraction appear in your actions. Be mindful of these things.

XXV.

Give up your anger: let it go. What then is the one who is throwing it away?

XXVI.

When you are disturbed by something, remember that all things pass away.

Everything comes from nature, and that what is wrong is another's, and that all that is created has always been created and is now created in the same way: that the relationship of man to all other human beings is not of blood or seed, but of community. And remember that each person's mind is a god given and placed within them: that no one has anything that is their own, but even their body and possessions were given to them: that everything will pass away: that each person only has what is now and will let go of it.

XXVII.

Let go of those who have wronged you, those who have been honored with great praise, wealth, or any other external advantages. Then ask yourself: Where are they now? All turned to smoke, ashes, dust, or nothing at all.

Also consider how quickly all these things pass away: Fabius Catullinus from the fields, Lucius Doupus in the markets, Stertinus in Baiae, Tiberius in Capri, and Oulius Roufus, and all the rest in whatever place they were. How quickly it all vanishes! And how fitting and philosophical it is to accept with equanimity whatever befalls us, being mindful of God, and to bear it bravely and nobly. For what is more wretched than a person overwhelmed by misfortune?

XXVIII.

I should ask those who seek: Where can I find the gods, or how can I be sure that they exist and are worthy of reverence? First, they must be seen as truly existing; then, I must reverence even my own mind and do so consistently. So too with the gods, from whom I constantly seek help - I must accept that they exist and revere them.

XXIX.

Every living being has its own purpose in life.

Do what is right and speak what is true. Live in harmony with the rest of the universe, without leaving out even the smallest detail.

XXX.

Things like fire, water, and other bodies are composed of one substance and take on different shapes. Soul is one thing and takes on different forms. Mind is one thing and is expressed in different ways. Reason is one thing and is understood in different ways. The other parts of the universe, such as air and earth, are connected and interact with each other. Reason, however, is unified and consistent and does not take on a social form.

XXXI.

What are you seeking? To breathe easily? Or to be content? To be admired? To speak wisely? To use your voice? To understand? What of these do you think is most important? If each of these is done properly, then the ultimate goal is to be in harmony with the word and with God. But the greatest honor is to be able to give up these things if they are taken away from you.

XXXII.

Everyone has a limited lifespan: it is soon revealed to each of us. But the span of one's life is not the only thing that is limited; the span of one's soul and of one's perception is also limited. Consider all these things and don't be too ambitious or try to do more than nature allows.

How can one use their power of reason? Everything is contained within it. The rest is either optional or not necessary - it is dead and smoke.

XXXIV.

For death, consider it a natural and necessary thing, and that those who judge pleasure and pain rightly also judge it rightly.

XXXV.

Only do what is right and good, and be content with the majority's opinion. It makes no difference whether you live a long or short life, death is still frightening.

XXXVI.

Be a citizen in the great city of the world: what difference does it make to you whether you live five or three years? For all are equal under the laws. What harm is there, then, if a tyrant or an unjust judge should take you away? It is no different than if the playwright should take away the actor who has played his part well. But I didn't say five acts, I said three. You said it well: in life, the three acts are the whole drama. For it is he who determines the end of the comedy or the tragedy. Now you are the cause of the dissolution: but you are blameless in both. So be content: for the actor too is content.