# Discourses

EPICTETUS

c. AD 50–135

# Discourses

Ἀρριανοῦ τῶν Ἐπικτήτου διατριβῶν

*Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited*

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*Discourses* · Epictetus (c. AD 50–135)

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# INTRODUCTION

Epictetus was born a slave around AD 50, became a free man, and taught Stoic philosophy, first in Rome and then, after the emperor Domitian banished the philosophers, at Nicopolis in western Greece. He wrote nothing. His student Arrian, later a Roman governor and historian, took down his talks as nearly as he could in Epictetus' own words; four of the original eight books survive.

These are not lectures but the conversations after the lesson: blunt, funny, impatient, full of questions fired at students and visitors, imagined dialogues, and examples from everyday Roman life—the bath, the dinner party, the governor's antechamber, the tyrant's threats. Everything returns to one distinction: some things are up to us—our judgments, choices, desires and aversions—and everything else is not. Freedom and peace of mind come from caring only for the first.

The *Discourses* are the fuller source of the teaching that Arrian condensed into the *Handbook*. Marcus Aurelius read them and quotes them, and they have been read ever since by anyone trying to live steadily under pressure.

# Book I

*Arrian's preface; what is up to us; kinship with God; providence; progress; how to face tyrants, hardship and death.*

## ARRIAN TO LUCIUS GELLIUS

Pref.1 I didn't write up the discourses of Epictetus the way someone might write up such things, and I didn't publish them myself either. In fact, I don't claim to have written them up at all.[1]

Pref.2 What I did was this: whatever I heard him say, I tried to write down, as far as possible in his very words, and keep as notes for myself for later, a record of his thinking and his frankness.

Pref.3 So naturally they're the kind of thing one person would say to another on the spur of the moment, not the kind of thing someone would compose for others to read later.

Pref.4 Such as they are, they have somehow, I don't know how, got out into the world, without my consent or knowledge.

Pref.5 But it matters little to me if I turn out not to be up to writing, and to Epictetus it doesn't matter in the least if anyone despises his discourses. Even when he was speaking them, it was clear that he aimed at nothing except to move his listeners' minds toward what is best.

Pref.6 If these discourses achieve just that, they will have, I think, what the discourses of philosophers ought to have.

1 Arrian (Lucius Flavius Arrianus, c. AD 86–160), later a Roman senator and historian of Alexander, heard Epictetus at Nicopolis as a young man. Lucius Gellius is otherwise unknown.

Pref.7 If not, let those who read them know at least this: when he himself spoke them, his listener couldn't help feeling exactly what he wanted him to feel.

Pref.8 If the discourses on their own don't achieve this, perhaps I'm to blame, or perhaps it can't be otherwise. Farewell.

## CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS UP TO US AND WHAT IS NOT

*Only the faculty of reason judges itself; the gods gave us the right use of impressions alone.*

1.1.1 Among all our other faculties you'll find none that can study itself, and so none that can approve or disapprove of itself either.

1.1.2 How far does grammar's power of study extend? As far as telling letters apart. And music's? As far as telling melodies apart.

1.1.3 Does either of them study itself, then? Not at all. When you're writing something to a friend, grammar will tell you which letters to write. But whether you should write to your friend or not, grammar won't tell you. It's the same with music and melodies: whether you should sing and play the lyre right now, or neither sing nor play, music won't tell you.

1.1.4 What will tell you, then? The faculty that studies both itself and everything else. And what is that? The faculty of reason. It's the only one we've been given that can understand both itself (what it is, what it can do, and how valuable a thing it is that has come to us) and all the others as well.

1.1.5 What else is it that says gold is beautiful? Gold itself doesn't say so. Clearly it's the faculty that makes use of impressions.[2]

1.1.6 What else judges music, grammar and the other faculties, assesses how they're used and points out the right moment for using them? Nothing else.

1.1.7 So, as was only fitting, the gods have made only the best thing of all, the one that rules the rest, up to us: the right use of

impressions. Everything else they have made not up to us. Was it because they didn't want to?

1.1.8 I think that if they could have, they'd have entrusted those other things to us too. But they simply couldn't.

1.1.9 Since we live on earth, bound to a body like this one and to companions like these, how could we not be hindered in these matters by things outside us?

But what does Zeus say?

1.1.10 "Epictetus, if it had been possible, I would have made your little body and your bit of property free and unhindered as well."

1.1.11 "As it is, though, make no mistake: this body isn't yours. It's just clay, cleverly kneaded."

1.1.12 "And since I couldn't do that, I have given you a small portion of myself: this faculty of impulse and repulsion, of desire and aversion, in a word, the faculty that makes use of impressions. If you take care of it and place what is yours in it, you will never be blocked, never hindered; you won't groan, you won't blame, you won't flatter anyone. Well then? Do these seem small things to you?" "Far from it!"

1.1.13 "Are you content with them, then?" "I pray to the gods I may be."

1.1.14 But as it is, though we could take care of just one thing and attach ourselves to just one, we'd rather take care of many and be tied to many: to our body, our property, a brother, a friend, a child, a slave.

1.1.15 And since we're tied to many things, we're weighed down by them and dragged under.

1.1.16 That's why, if the weather won't let us sail, we sit there fretting and keep peering out: "What wind is blowing? The north wind." What's that to us? "When will the west wind blow?" When it pleases, my good man, or when it pleases Aeolus. God didn't make you steward of the winds; he made Aeolus.[3]

2 "Impression" (φαντασία) is the Stoic term for anything that appears to the mind: a perception, a thought, a sense that something is so.

3 In the *Odyssey* (book 10), Aeolus is appointed keeper of the winds.

1.1.17 What then? We must make the best of what is up to us, and take everything else as it comes by nature. "And how does it come by nature?" As God wills.

1.1.18 "So am I the only one to be beheaded now?" What, then? Did you want everyone beheaded, so you could have some consolation?

1.1.19 Won't you stretch out your neck the way a certain Lateranus did in Rome, when Nero ordered him beheaded? He stretched out his neck and was struck, and when the blow proved too weak he flinched back a little, and then stretched it out again.[4]

1.1.20 Even before that, when Epaphroditus, my master and Nero's freedman, came to him and questioned him about the plot, he said, "If I want anything, I'll tell your master."[5]

1.1.21 "What, then, should we have ready at hand in situations like these?" What else but this: what is mine and what isn't mine, what I'm allowed and what I'm not?

1.1.22 I must die. Must I die groaning too? I must be put in chains. Wailing too? I must go into exile. Does anyone stop me from going laughing and cheerful, with my life flowing smoothly?

1.1.23 "Tell me your secrets." I won't; that's up to me. "Then I'll put you in chains." Man, what are you saying? Chain *me*? You may fetter my leg, but not even Zeus can overcome my choice.[6]

1.1.24 "I'll throw you in prison." My poor body, you mean. "I'll have your head cut off." Well, when did I ever tell you that mine was the only neck that couldn't be cut?

1.1.25 These are the things that students of philosophy should rehearse, write down every day and train themselves in.

4 Plautius Lateranus, consul-designate, was executed in AD 65 for his part in the conspiracy of Piso against Nero.

5 Epaphroditus, Nero's freedman and secretary, owned Epictetus when Epictetus was a slave.

6 "Choice" (προαίρεσις) is the faculty of choice: the self that judges, assents and wills, which for Epictetus is the only thing truly one's own.

1.1.26 Thrasea used to say, "I'd rather be killed today than exiled tomorrow."[7]

1.1.27 And what did Rufus say to him? "If you choose death as the heavier fate, what a foolish choice! If as the lighter, who gave you the choice? Won't you practice being content with what you've been given?"[8]

1.1.28 That's why Agrippinus used to say, what? "I don't stand in my own way." Word was brought to him: "You're on trial in the senate." —[9]

1.1.29 "Good luck to it. But it's the fifth hour" (the time when he used to exercise and then take a cold bath);[10]

1.1.30 "let's go and exercise." When he'd finished exercising, someone came and told him, "You've been condemned." —"To exile," he said, "or to death?" —"To exile." —"And my property?" —"It hasn't been confiscated." —"Then let's go to Aricia and have lunch."[11]

1.1.31 —That's what it means to have rehearsed what one should rehearse: to have trained desire and aversion so that nothing can thwart the one or trap the other. I must die.

1.1.32 If it's now, I die now. If it's a little later, I'll have lunch now, since it's time, and die later. How? As befits someone giving back what belongs to another.

7 Publius Clodius Thrasea Paetus, a Stoic senator, was forced to kill himself by Nero in AD 66.

8 Musonius Rufus, the Roman Stoic under whom Epictetus studied.

9 Paconius Agrippinus, a Stoic senator, was condemned to exile under Nero in AD 66.

10 The Roman day was divided into twelve hours from sunrise; the fifth hour is late morning.

11 Aricia was a town about fifteen miles south of Rome on the Appian Way, the natural first stop on the road into exile.

## CHAPTER 2: HOW TO KEEP TRUE TO ONE'S ROLE IN EVERY SITUATION

*What is reasonable depends on one's role; Helvidius Priscus and Agrippinus refuse to act beneath themselves.*

1.2.1 To a rational creature only what is unreasonable is unbearable; what is reasonable can be borne.

1.2.2 Blows aren't unbearable by nature. —How so? —Look: Spartans let themselves be whipped once they've learned that it's reasonable.[12]

1.2.3 —And hanging yourself, isn't that unbearable? —Well, when someone feels that it's reasonable, he goes off and hangs himself.

1.2.4 In short, if we pay attention, we'll find that nothing distresses this creature so much as what is unreasonable, and nothing attracts it so much as what is reasonable.

1.2.5 But what strikes one person as reasonable or unreasonable differs from what strikes another, just as good and bad differ from one person to another, and so do the advantageous and the disadvantageous.

1.2.6 That's the main reason we need education: to learn to apply our preconception of the reasonable and the unreasonable to particular cases in harmony with nature.[13]

1.2.7 And in judging what is reasonable and unreasonable, we take into account not only the value of external things but also what fits each person's own role.[14]

1.2.8 For one person it's reasonable to hold the chamber pot, since all he looks at is this: if he doesn't hold it, he'll get a beat-

12 Spartan youths were flogged at the altar of Artemis Orthia as a test of endurance.

13 A "preconception" (πρόληψις) is a basic notion, such as of good or of justice, that all people share before any teaching; the difficulty lies in applying it correctly.

14 "Role" translates πρόσωπον, literally a face or an actor's mask: the part each person has to play.

ing and no food, and if he does, he'll suffer nothing harsh or painful.[15]

1.2.9 But to someone else, not only holding it himself seems unbearable, but even putting up with someone else holding it.

1.2.10 So if you ask me, "Should I hold the chamber pot or not?", I'll tell you that getting food has greater value than not getting it, and being flogged has greater disvalue than not being flogged. So if you measure your affairs by these, go and hold it.

1.2.11 "But it wouldn't be worthy of me." That's for you to bring into the inquiry, not me. You're the one who knows yourself, how much you're worth to yourself and at what price you sell yourself. Different people sell themselves at different prices.

1.2.12 That's why, when Florus was considering whether he should go down into Nero's shows and perform some part himself, Agrippinus told him, "Go down."[16]

1.2.13 And when Florus asked him, "Why aren't you going down?", he said, "Because I'm not even considering it."

1.2.14 For once someone stoops to considering such things and starts totting up the values of externals, he's close to those who have forgotten their own role.

1.2.15 What are you asking me? "Is death preferable, or life?" I say life.

1.2.16 "Pain or pleasure?" I say pleasure. "But if I don't perform in the tragedy, I'll have my head cut off." Go and perform in the tragedy, then. But I won't.

1.2.17 "Why?" Because you think of yourself as just one thread among all those in the tunic. What follows? That you should take care not to be unlike other people, just as a thread doesn't want anything that sets it apart from the other threads.

1.2.18 But I want to be the purple, that small bright band that makes the rest look handsome and fine. So why do you tell me, "Be like the majority"? How will I still be the purple then?[17]

15 Holding the chamber pot for his master was the job of a household slave.
16 Nero compelled men of senatorial rank to appear on the stage and in the arena; this Florus is otherwise unknown.
17 Roman senators wore a broad purple stripe on the tunic.

1.2.19 Helvidius Priscus saw this too, and having seen it, he acted on it. When Vespasian sent word to him not to attend the senate, he replied, "It's in your power not to let me be a senator. But as long as I am one, I must attend."[18]

1.2.20 "All right, attend," he says, "but keep quiet." "Don't ask my opinion, and I'll keep quiet." "But I have to ask it." "And I have to say what seems right." "But if you say it, I'll have you killed."

1.2.21 "Well, when did I ever tell you I was immortal? You'll do your part and I'll do mine. Yours is to kill, mine to die without trembling; yours to banish, mine to leave without grieving."

1.2.22 What good did Priscus do, then, being only one man? And what good does the purple do the cloak? What else but that it stands out in it as purple and is displayed there as a fine example to the rest?

1.2.23 Someone else, if Caesar had told him not to come to the senate at a moment like that, would have said, "Thank you for sparing me."[19]

1.2.24 A man like that he wouldn't even have kept from attending. He knew he would either sit there like a jug or, if he spoke, say what he knew Caesar wanted, and pile on still more.

1.2.25 In the same way there was an athlete who was in danger of dying unless his genitals were cut off. His brother, who was a philosopher, came to him and said, "Come on, brother, what are you going to do? Are we cutting off this part and still going on to the gymnasium?" He wouldn't submit to it; he held firm and died.

1.2.26 Someone asked: How did he do this, as an athlete or as a philosopher? As a man, said Epictetus, but a man who had been proclaimed at Olympia and had competed there, who had spent his life in a place like that, not someone getting his rubdown at Bato's.[20]

18 Helvidius Priscus, a Stoic senator and Thrasea's son-in-law, was exiled and later executed under Vespasian, around AD 75.

19 "Caesar" is Epictetus's usual word for the reigning emperor.

20 Bato was presumably a trainer of the day whose gym stood for soft, easy exercise.

1.2.27 Someone else would even have had his head cut off, if he could have lived without it.

1.2.28 That's what regard for one's role is like, so strong is it in those who make a habit of bringing it, from within themselves, into their deliberations.

1.2.29 "Come on, Epictetus, shave off your beard." If I'm a philosopher, I say, "I won't shave." "Then I'll take off your head." If that's better for you, take it off.[21]

1.2.30 Someone asked: How, then, will each of us become aware of what fits his role? —How is it, he replied, that when a lion attacks, the bull alone becomes aware of its own strength and throws itself forward to defend the whole herd? Isn't it clear that as soon as it has the strength, the awareness of it comes too?

1.2.31 So too with us: whoever has strength like that won't be unaware of it.

1.2.32 But no one becomes a bull all at once, nor a noble human being. You have to train through the winter and prepare yourself, and not rush thoughtlessly at things that don't concern you.

1.2.33 Just consider at what price you're selling your choice. Man, if nothing else, don't sell it cheap. The great and extraordinary may belong to others, to Socrates and people like him.

1.2.34 —Why, then, if we're born for this, don't all of us, or most, become like that? —Do all horses become fast? Do all dogs become good trackers?

1.2.35 What then? Because I'm not naturally gifted, am I to give up taking care of myself on that account?

1.2.36 Heaven forbid! Epictetus won't be better than Socrates; but if he's not worse, that's enough for me.

1.2.37 I won't be Milo either, and yet I don't neglect my body; nor Croesus, and yet I don't neglect my property. In short, we don't give up taking care of anything else just because we despair of reaching the top.[22]

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21 A long beard was the mark of a philosopher.

22 Milo of Croton was the most famous wrestler of the sixth century BC; Croesus, king of Lydia, was a byword for wealth.

## CHAPTER 3: WHAT FOLLOWS FROM GOD BEING THE FATHER OF HUMAN BEINGS

*Knowing we are children of God should keep us from thinking anything mean or ignoble of ourselves.*

1.3.1 If a person could take this judgment to heart as it deserves, that we have all come from God in a special way and that God is father of both humans and gods, I think he'll never think anything ignoble or mean about himself.

1.3.2 If Caesar adopts you, there'll be no putting up with your airs. And if you know you're a son of Zeus, won't you be elated?

1.3.3 As it is, we aren't. These two things are mingled in our making: the body, which we share with the animals, and reason and intelligence, which we share with the gods. And so most people incline toward the first kinship, the wretched and dead one, and only a few toward the divine and blessed one.

1.3.4 Now since everyone necessarily treats each thing according to the opinion he has of it, those few who think they were born for trustworthiness, self-respect and a secure use of impressions think nothing mean or ignoble about themselves, while the majority do the opposite.

1.3.5 "What am I? A miserable little man," and, "My wretched bits of flesh."

1.3.6 Wretched they are, to be sure; but you've also got something better than bits of flesh. Why do you let go of that and cling to these?

1.3.7 Because of this kinship, those of us who incline toward it become like wolves, faithless, treacherous and harmful; others like lions, wild, savage and untamed; and most of us like foxes, the misfits, as it were, of the animal world.

1.3.8 For what else is a slanderous, malicious man but a fox, or something even more wretched and base?

1.3.9 So watch out and take care you don't turn out to be one of these misfits.

## CHAPTER 4: ON PROGRESS

*Progress lies not in reading Chrysippus but in bringing desire, aversion and impulse into line with nature.*

1.4.1 Someone making progress has learned from the philosophers that desire is for good things and aversion is toward bad things. He has also learned that the smooth flow of life and freedom from passion come to a person only if he doesn't fail to get what he desires or fall into what he wants to avoid. So he has removed desire from himself entirely, or put it off for now, and uses aversion only toward things that lie within his choice.

1.4.2 For he knows that if he avoids any of the things outside his choice, he'll run into one of them someday despite his aversion, and be unhappy.

1.4.3 Now if excellence promises to produce happiness, freedom from passion and a smooth flow of life, then progress toward excellence is certainly progress toward each of these too.

1.4.4 For whatever the perfection of anything ultimately leads to, progress is always an approach toward that.

1.4.5 How is it, then, that we agree that excellence is something like this, and yet look for progress, and show it off, in other things? What is the work of excellence?

1.4.6 A smooth flow of life. Who, then, is making progress? The man who has read lots of Chrysippus's treatises?[23]

1.4.7 Is excellence really this, having understood Chrysippus? Because if it is, then admittedly progress is nothing but understanding a great deal of Chrysippus.

1.4.8 As it is, we agree that excellence produces one thing, and yet we declare that the approach to it, progress, produces something else.

1.4.9 "This fellow," someone says, "can already read Chrysippus on his own." Well done, by the gods, man, you're making progress! Some progress!

23 Chrysippus (c. 280–207 BC), third head of the Stoic school, was its great systematizer and a prolific writer.

1.4.10 "Why are you mocking him?" And why are you distracting him from awareness of his own faults? Won't you show him the work of excellence, so he learns where to look for progress?

1.4.11 Look for it there, you poor wretch, where your work lies. And where does your work lie? In desire and aversion, so you won't fail to get what you desire or fall into what you'd avoid; in impulse and repulsion, so you won't go wrong; in assent and suspension of judgment, so you won't be deceived.

1.4.12 The first fields come first and are the most necessary. But if you're trembling and grieving while you try not to fall into what you'd avoid, how on earth are you making progress?[24]

1.4.13 So show me your progress here. It's as if I said to an athlete, "Show me your shoulders," and he said, "Look at my jumping weights." That's for you and your weights to see to! I want to see what the weights have produced.

1.4.14 "Take the treatise *On Impulse* and see how well I've read it." Slave! That's not what I'm after. I want to know how you exercise impulse and repulsion, how you desire and avoid, how you set about things, plan them and prepare for them: in harmony with nature, or out of harmony with it.

1.4.15 If in harmony, show me that and I'll tell you you're making progress. If out of harmony, go away, and don't just expound books: write some like them yourself.

1.4.16 And what good will it do you? Don't you know the whole book costs five denarii? So does the man who expounds it think he's worth more than five denarii?

1.4.17 So never look for your work in one place and your progress in another.

1.4.18 Where, then, is progress? Suppose one of you has turned away from externals and turned to his own choice, to work on it and perfect it until it's in harmony with nature: lofty, free, unhindered, unimpeded, trustworthy, self-respecting.

1.4.19 Suppose he has learned that whoever longs for or flees from what is not up to him can be neither trustworthy nor free,

24 Epictetus divides the philosopher's training into three fields: desire and aversion; impulse and repulsion; and assent. The first is the most basic.

but is bound to be changed and tossed about along with those things, and bound to put himself under others, those who can provide or prevent them.

1.4.20 And suppose that from then on, when he gets up in the morning, he watches over and guards these things; bathes as a trustworthy man, eats as a self-respecting one; and likewise works out his principles in whatever situation comes his way, as the runner does with running and the voice trainer with training the voice.

1.4.21 This is the one who is truly making progress, and this is the one who hasn't left home for nothing.

1.4.22 But if he's intent on the skill that's found in books, works at that and has left home for that, I tell him to go straight back home and not neglect his affairs there.

1.4.23 What he left home for is nothing. The thing is to practice removing from one's life grief and lamentation, "Alas!" and "Poor me!", misfortune and bad luck, and to learn

1.4.24 what death is, what exile is, what prison is, what hemlock is, so that one can say in prison, "My dear Crito, if this is what pleases the gods, so be it," and not those other things: "Poor me, an old man! Was it for this that I kept my gray hairs?"[25]

1.4.25 Who says such things? Do you think I'm going to name someone obscure and lowly? Doesn't Priam say them? Doesn't Oedipus? Why, how many kings say them!

1.4.26 For what else are tragedies but the sufferings of people who have admired externals, put on display in verse of this kind?

1.4.27 If one had to be deceived in order to learn that nothing external and outside our choice matters to us, I for one would want that deception, which would let me live with my life flowing smoothly and free of disturbance. As for you, you'll see for yourselves what you want.

25 Socrates' words to his friend Crito in Plato's *Crito* (43d), as he awaited execution by hemlock.

1.4.28 What, then, does Chrysippus offer us? So that you may know, he says, that these things are not false from which the smooth flow of life comes and freedom from passion arises,

1.4.29 take my books, and you will learn how and in harmony with nature are the things that make me free from passion. What great good fortune! What a great benefactor, the one who shows the way!

1.4.30 And yet all people have set up temples and altars to Triptolemus[26]

1.4.31 because he gave us cultivated food. But to the one who discovered the truth, brought it to light and shared it with all people, not the truth about merely living but about living well, which of you has set up an altar for that, or a temple, or dedicated a statue, or worships God for it?

1.4.32 Because the gods gave us the vine or wheat, we offer sacrifice for that. And because they have produced such fruit in the human mind, through which they meant to show us the truth about happiness, shall we not give thanks to God for that?

## CHAPTER 5: AGAINST THE ACADEMICS

*Someone who denies what is evident has let his intellect or his sense of shame turn to stone.*

1.5.1 If someone, he says, resists what is utterly obvious, it isn't easy to find an argument that will change his mind.[27]

1.5.2 That isn't because of his strength or the teacher's weakness. When a man has been driven into absurdity and turns to stone, how can anyone still deal with him by argument?

1.5.3 There are two kinds of petrification: petrification of the intellect, and petrification of the sense of shame, when someone is set on neither assenting to what is evident nor abandoning contradictions.

26 Triptolemus was the hero of Eleusis who, in myth, taught humankind to grow grain.

27 The Academics were the skeptical successors of Plato in the Academy, who denied that anything can be known with certainty.

1.5.4 Most of us are afraid of the body going dead, and would try anything to avoid something like that happening to us; but when the soul is going dead, we don't care at all.

1.5.5 And, by Zeus, in the case of the soul itself, if someone is in such a state that he can follow nothing and understand nothing, we think he too is in a bad way. But if someone's sense of shame and self-respect has gone dead, we even call that strength!

Do you grasp with certainty that you're awake?

1.5.6 "No," he says, "because I don't when I have the impression in my dreams that I'm awake either." So this impression doesn't differ at all from that one? "Not at all." Am I still talking to this man?

1.5.7 And what fire or what steel am I to apply to him to make him feel that he has gone dead? He feels it and pretends he doesn't: he's even worse than a corpse. One man doesn't see the contradiction: he's in a bad way.

1.5.8 Another sees it but isn't moved and makes no progress: he's in an even more wretched state.

1.5.9 His self-respect and sense of shame have been cut out of him, and his reason hasn't been cut away but turned into a beast's.

1.5.10 Am I to call this strength? Heaven forbid! Not unless I also call it strength in debauchees, the kind that lets them do and say whatever comes into their heads in public.

## CHAPTER 6: ON PROVIDENCE

*The world's fitting design shows a craftsman, and we have been given faculties to bear whatever happens.*

1.6.1 It's easy to praise providence for everything that happens in the world, if you have two things in you: the ability to see how each thing that happens fits the whole, and a sense of gratitude.

1.6.2 Otherwise, one person won't see the usefulness of what has happened, and another won't be grateful for it even if he does see it.

1.6.3 If God had made colors but hadn't made the power to see them, what use would they have been?

1.6.4 —None at all. —And conversely, if he had made the power, but hadn't made things such as to fall within the power of sight, what use would that have been?

1.6.5 —None at all.

1.6.6 —And what if he had made both of these, but hadn't made light? —Even then, no use. —Who is it, then, who fitted this to that and that to this? Who fitted the sword to the scabbard and the scabbard to the sword?

1.6.7 No one? And yet from the very construction of finished products we regularly conclude that they must be the work of some craftsman and weren't put together at random.

1.6.8 So does each of these reveal its craftsman, while visible things, sight and light don't?

1.6.9 And male and female, and each one's eagerness for intercourse, and the capacity to use the organs made for it—don't these reveal the craftsman either?

1.6.10 So much for these. But then there's the way our mind is made: we don't simply receive impressions from sensible things when we encounter them; we also pick something out, subtract, add and combine certain things by means of them, and, by Zeus, pass from some things to others that are related to them in some way. Isn't even this enough to move some people and shame them out of leaving the craftsman out of account?

1.6.11 Or else let them explain to us what it is that produces each of these things, or how things so wonderful and so skillfully made could come about at random and by chance.

1.6.12 What then? Do these things happen in us alone? Many do happen in us alone, things the rational creature particularly needed; but you'll find many that we share with irrational animals too.

1.6.13 Do they also understand what happens, then? Not at all. Using is one thing, understanding another. God needed them as creatures that use impressions, but us as creatures that understand that use.

1.6.14 That's why for them it's enough to eat, drink, rest, mate and do whatever else each of them does. But for us, to whom he gave the faculty of understanding as well,

1.6.15 these things are no longer enough. Unless we act properly, in an orderly way and in keeping with each one's nature and constitution, we will no longer attain our own end.

1.6.16 For where constitutions differ, works and ends differ too.

1.6.17 So for a creature whose constitution is suited only to using things, any use at all is enough. But a creature whose constitution is also suited to understanding its use will never attain its end unless it adds acting properly.

1.6.18 What then? He makes each of those animals, one to be eaten, another to serve in farming, another to produce cheese, and others for other similar uses. For these, what need is there to understand impressions and be able to tell them apart?

1.6.19 But he brought the human being into the world as a spectator of himself and his works, and not only as a spectator, but as an interpreter of them.

1.6.20 That's why it's shameful for a human being to begin and end where the irrational animals do. Rather, he should begin there and end where nature ended with us.

1.6.21 And it ended in contemplation, understanding and a way of life in harmony with nature.

1.6.22 So take care you don't die without ever having seen these things.

1.6.23 You travel to Olympia to see the work of Phidias, and each of you thinks it a misfortune to die without having seen it.[28]

1.6.24 But where there's no need even to travel, where you're already here, in the presence of his works, will you have no desire to look at them and understand them?

1.6.25 Won't you realize, then, who you are, what you were born for, and what this spectacle you've been admitted to see is [for]?

1.6.26 —But there are unpleasant and hard things in life. —And there aren't at Olympia? Don't you get scorched by the heat?

28 Phidias's great gold-and-ivory statue of Zeus at Olympia was counted among the wonders of the world.

Aren't you crammed together? Isn't it hard to get a bath? Don't you get soaked when it rains? Don't you get your fill of noise and shouting and all the other hardships?

1.6.27 But I suppose you set all this against the splendor of the spectacle, and bear it and put up with it.

1.6.28 Come now, haven't you received faculties with which to bear whatever happens? Haven't you received greatness of soul? Haven't you received courage?

1.6.29 Haven't you received endurance? And if I'm great-souled, what do I care any longer about anything that may happen? What will unsettle or disturb me, or seem painful to me? Shall I not use my faculty for the purpose for which I received it, but grieve and groan over what happens?

1.6.30 "Yes, but my nose is running." What have you got hands for, then, slave? Isn't it so you can wipe your nose?

1.6.31 —But is it reasonable that there should be runny noses in the world?

1.6.32 —And how much better to wipe your nose than to complain! Or what do you think Heracles would have become if there hadn't been a lion like that, and a hydra, a deer, a boar, and certain unjust and brutal men whom he drove out and cleared away?

1.6.33 And what would he have done if nothing like that had existed? Isn't it obvious that he'd have wrapped himself up and slept? In the first place, then, he'd never have become Heracles, dozing his whole life away in such luxury and ease; and even if he had, what use would he have been?

1.6.34 What use would his arms have been, and the rest of his strength, his endurance and his nobility, if such circumstances and such material hadn't shaken him up and trained him?

1.6.35 What then? Should he have created them for himself, and looked for somewhere to get a lion to bring into his own country, and a boar and a hydra?

1.6.36 That would have been folly and madness. But since they did exist and turned up, they were useful for revealing Heracles and training him.

1.6.37 Come, then, now that you're aware of this, you too look at the faculties you have, and when you've looked, say: "Bring on whatever circumstance you like now, Zeus. I have the equipment you've given me, and the resources to make something fine of myself through whatever happens."

1.6.38 No; instead you sit trembling that some things may happen, and wailing, grieving and groaning over the things that do. And then you blame the gods.

1.6.39 For what else follows from such meanness of spirit but impiety as well?

1.6.40 And yet God has not only given us these faculties, with which to bear everything that happens without being humbled or broken by it; but, as befitted a good king and a true father, he gave it to us free of hindrance, free of compulsion, unimpeded. He made it wholly up to us, without keeping even for himself any power to prevent or hinder it.

1.6.41 Though you have these things free and your own, you don't use them, and you don't realize what you've received and from whom.

1.6.42 Instead you sit grieving and groaning, some of you blind to the giver himself and not recognizing your benefactor, others turning, out of meanness of spirit, to complaints and accusations against God.

1.6.43 And yet I'll show you that you have the resources and the equipment for greatness of soul and courage. You show me what resources you have for complaining and accusing.

## CHAPTER 7: ON THE USE OF SHIFTING AND HYPOTHETICAL ARGUMENTS

*Logic belongs to duty, because a good man must not handle premises and conclusions carelessly.*

1.7.1 The study of arguments with shifting premises, hypothetical arguments, arguments that reach their conclusion through

questioning, and in short all arguments of that kind, is concerned with duty, though most people don't realize it.[29]

1.7.2 For in every matter we're looking for how the good and honorable man may find the right way through it and the right way to conduct himself in it.

1.7.3 So let them say either that the good man won't stoop to question and answer, or that if he does, he won't take care to avoid conducting himself carelessly and haphazardly in question and answer.

1.7.4 Or else, if they accept neither of these, they must admit that some study has to be made of these topics, which question and answer chiefly revolve around.

1.7.5 For what does reasoning undertake to do? To affirm what is true, reject what is false and suspend judgment on what is unclear.

1.7.6 So is it enough just to learn this? —It's enough, he says. — Then is it also enough, for someone who doesn't want to go wrong in handling money, to hear why you accept genuine drachmas and reject counterfeit ones?

1.7.7 —It isn't enough. —What must he add to this, then? What else but the ability to test and tell apart genuine drachmas and counterfeit?

1.7.8 So in reasoning too, what has been said isn't enough; one has to become able to test and tell apart the true, the false and the unclear?

1.7.9 —One has to. —And besides this, what does reasoning prescribe? Accept what follows properly from what you have granted.

1.7.10 Come, then, is it enough here too to know this? It isn't. You must learn how one thing follows from others, and how sometimes one thing follows from one, sometimes from several together.

1.7.11 Isn't it necessary, then, for anyone who means to conduct himself intelligently in argument to acquire this too, so as to

29 "Duty" (τὸ καθῆκον) is the Stoic term for appropriate action: what befits a rational being in a given situation.

give demonstrations himself, setting out each point, and follow those of others, and not be led astray by sophists as if they were demonstrating something?

1.7.12 So we've arrived at the study of conclusive arguments and logical forms, and training in them, and it has turned out to be necessary.

1.7.13 But there are cases where we have soundly granted the premises and such-and-such follows from them; and though it's false, it follows nonetheless.

1.7.14 What, then, is my duty? To accept the falsehood?

1.7.15 And how could I? Should I say, "I wasn't right to grant what was agreed"? But that isn't allowed either. Or, "It doesn't follow from what was granted"? That isn't allowed either.

1.7.16 What should one do in these cases, then? Perhaps this: just as having borrowed isn't enough to make you still in debt (the loan must also still stand and not have been paid off), so having granted the premises isn't enough to oblige you to grant the conclusion; you must also still stand by your granting of them.

1.7.17 And if they do remain to the end as they were when they were granted, we are absolutely bound to stand by our granting of them and accept what follows from them

1.7.19 for this conclusion no longer follows for us or on our account, since we have withdrawn our granting of the premises.

1.7.20 So one must also examine premises of this kind, and the kind of change and shift they undergo, through which, as they shift in the course of the questioning itself, or the answering, or the drawing of the conclusion, or at some other such stage, they give foolish people, who don't see what follows, occasion to be disturbed. For what purpose?

1.7.21 So that in this area we don't behave contrary to duty, or at random, or in confusion.

1.7.22 And the same goes for hypotheses and hypothetical arguments. For it's sometimes necessary to request some hypothesis as a stepping-stone to the argument that follows.

1.7.23 Should we, then, accept every hypothesis that is put forward, or not every one? And if not every one, which?

1.7.24 [What is the inquiry about? About duty.] And once we've accepted it, must we stand by it for good, or sometimes abandon it, accepting what follows and not accepting what conflicts with it?

1.7.25 —Yes. —But someone says, "I'll make you accept a possible hypothesis and then lead you to an impossibility." Will the man of understanding refuse to engage with him, and run away from examination and discussion?

1.7.26 And who else is there who can use reason and is skilled at question and answer, and, by Zeus, proof against deception and sophistry?

1.7.27 Or will he engage, but not bother to avoid conducting himself carelessly and haphazardly in argument? Then how will he still be the kind of man we conceive him to be?

1.7.28 But without some such training and preparation, is he able to keep track of what follows?

1.7.29 Let them show that, and then all these theories are superfluous; they were absurd all along and inconsistent with our preconception of the good man.

1.7.30 Why are we still lazy, easygoing and sluggish, looking for excuses not to toil or stay up at night perfecting our reason?

1.7.31 —So if I go wrong in these things, have I killed my father? —Slave! Where was there a father here for you to kill? What have you done, then? You've committed the only fault there was to commit in this area.

1.7.32 Why, that's exactly what I said myself to Rufus when he scolded me for not finding the one missing step in some syllogism. "It's not as if I'd burned down the Capitol," I said. And he said, "Slave, here the missing step *is* the Capitol."[30]

1.7.33 Or are these the only faults, burning down the Capitol and killing your father? And using your impressions carelessly, pointlessly and haphazardly, failing to follow an argument, a demonstration or a sophism, and in short failing to see, in ques-

30 The temple of Jupiter on the Capitol was Rome's chief sanctuary.

tion and answer, what fits your position and what doesn't—is none of that a fault?

## CHAPTER 8: THAT FACULTIES ARE NOT SAFE FOR THE UNEDUCATED

*Skill in argument and style can make untrained students conceited; the human good lies in choice.*

1.8.1 In as many ways as equivalent statements can be interchanged, in just so many ways can the forms of arguments and enthymemes be varied in reasoning.

1.8.2 Take this form, for example: if you borrowed and haven't repaid, you owe me the money; it is not the case that you borrowed and haven't repaid; so you don't owe me the money.

1.8.3 And no one is better suited to do this skillfully than the philosopher. For if the enthymeme is an incomplete syllogism, clearly someone trained in the complete syllogism would be no less capable with the incomplete one.

1.8.4 Why, then, don't we train ourselves and one another in this way?

1.8.5 Because even now, when we aren't training in these things and aren't being distracted from caring for our character, by me at any rate, we still make no advance toward being good and honorable.

1.8.6 What should we expect, then, if we took on this occupation as well? Especially since it would not only be a distraction from more necessary things, but also no small occasion for conceit and vanity.

1.8.7 For the faculty of argument and persuasion is a great one, especially if it gets plenty of training and also acquires some polish from fine language.

1.8.8 For in general any faculty is dangerous when it comes to the uneducated and weak, since it can make them conceited and puffed up over it.

1.8.9 For by what device could you still persuade a young man who excels in these things that he shouldn't become an appendage to them, but make them an appendage to himself?

1.8.10 Doesn't he trample all these arguments underfoot and strut about among us, elated and puffed up, unable to bear it if anyone takes hold of him [at all] to remind him what he's lacking and where he has gone astray?

1.8.11 What then? Wasn't Plato a philosopher? —Well, wasn't Hippocrates a doctor? Yet you see how well Hippocrates expresses himself. Does Hippocrates express himself like that insofar as he's a doctor?[31]

1.8.12 Why, then, do you mix up things that just happen to coincide in the same people?

1.8.13 And if Plato was handsome and strong, should I too sit down and work at becoming handsome or strong, as if this were necessary for philosophy, because a certain philosopher happened to be both handsome and a philosopher?

1.8.14 Won't you notice and distinguish what it is that makes people philosophers from what just happens to belong to them? Come now, if I were a philosopher, would you all have to be lame too? What then?[32]

1.8.15 Am I doing away with these faculties? Heaven forbid! No more than I would with the faculty of sight.

1.8.16 All the same, if you ask me what a human being's good is, I can tell you nothing except that it is a certain kind of choice [of impressions].

## CHAPTER 9: WHAT FOLLOWS FROM OUR KINSHIP WITH GOD

*A citizen of the universe, kin to God, should fear nothing, yet must wait for God's signal to leave.*

1.9.1 If what the philosophers say about the kinship between God and humans is true, what else is left for people but Socrates' way: never, when someone asks where you're from, to say you're an Athenian or a Corinthian, but a citizen of the universe?

31 Hippocrates of Cos (fifth century BC), the most famous of ancient physicians, whose writings were admired for their style.

32 Epictetus was lame.

1.9.2 For why do you say you're an Athenian, and not just from that corner where your poor body was cast at birth?

1.9.3 Isn't it obvious that you call yourself an Athenian or a Corinthian from something more authoritative, which takes in not only that corner itself but your whole household and, in short, the place your line of ancestors came down to you from, from somewhere there?

1.9.4 So then, anyone who has studied the government of the universe and learned that "the greatest, most authoritative and most comprehensive of all things is this community made up of humans and God, and that from it the seeds have fallen not only to my father and grandfather, but to all things that are born and grow on earth, and above all to rational beings,

1.9.5 since these alone are by nature fit to share in fellowship with God, being bound up with him through reason,"

1.9.6 why shouldn't [such a person] call himself a citizen of the universe? Why not a son of God? And why should he fear anything that happens among human beings?

1.9.7 Is kinship with Caesar or some other powerful man in Rome enough to let people live in safety, beyond contempt and fearing nothing at all, while having God as our maker, father and guardian won't free us from griefs and fears?

1.9.8 —And where am I to get food, someone says, if I've got nothing? —And how do slaves manage, how do runaways? What do they rely on when they leave their masters? Their fields? Their servants? Their silver plate? Nothing but themselves. And yet they don't run short of food.

1.9.9 And is our philosopher, when he goes abroad, going to have to rely and lean on others, and not take care of himself, and be worse and more cowardly than the irrational beasts? Each of them is sufficient for itself and lacks neither its proper food nor a suitable way of life in accordance with nature.

1.9.10 For my part, I think your elder ought to be sitting here not trying to contrive how to stop you from thinking meanly of yourselves, or reasoning about yourselves in a mean and ignoble way,

1.9.11 but guarding against young men of another sort turning up: men who have recognized their kinship with the gods, and that we have these chains fastened on us—the body and its possessions and whatever we need on their account for managing and conducting our lives—and who want to throw them off as burdensome, troublesome and useless, and depart to their kin.

1.9.12 That's the contest your teacher and educator, if you had a real one, ought to be fighting: you'd come and say, "Epictetus, we can't stand it any longer, being tied to this poor body, feeding it, giving it drink and rest and cleaning it, and then, because of it, having to humor this person and that.

1.9.13 Aren't these things indifferents, nothing to us? Isn't death not bad? Aren't we kin to God, and didn't we come from there?

1.9.14 Let us go back where we came from; let us be freed at last from these chains that hang on us and weigh us down.

1.9.15 Here there are robbers and thieves and law courts and so-called tyrants, who think they have some power over us because of our poor bodies and their possessions. Let us show them that they have power over nothing."

1.9.16 and I, for my part, should be telling them: "People, wait for God. When he gives the signal and releases you from this service, then go off to him. But for the present, put up with living in this place where he has stationed you."

1.9.17 "Short, after all, is this time of your stay here, and easy for those who are disposed this way. What tyrant, what thief, what law court can still frighten people who have come to count the body and its possessions as nothing? Stay. Don't leave without good reason."

1.9.18 Something like this is what should pass between a teacher and the gifted among the young.

1.9.19 But as it is, what happens? The teacher is a corpse, and so are you. When you've eaten your fill today, you sit there weeping about tomorrow and where your food will come from.

1.9.20 Slave! If you get it, you'll have it; if you don't, you'll leave. The door is open. Why grieve? Where is there any room left for tears? What occasion for flattery? Why should one person envy

another? Why should anyone be awed by people who own a lot, or who are placed in power, especially if they're strong and hot-tempered?

1.9.21 What will they do to us? What they can do, we won't care about; what we care about, they can't do. Who, then, will still rule over someone disposed like this?

1.9.22 How did Socrates stand toward these things? How else than as a man convinced that he was kin to the gods ought to stand?

1.9.23 "If you were to tell me now," he says, "'We acquit you on these terms: that you stop holding these discussions you've been holding up to now, and that you no longer pester our young men, or our old men either,'

1.9.24 I'll answer that you're ridiculous if you think that when your general posts me somewhere, I have to hold that post and guard it and choose to die ten thousand times rather than desert it, but when God has stationed us in some place and way of life, that is the post we should desert."

1.9.25 That is a human being who is truly kin to the gods.

1.9.26 We, though, think of ourselves as bellies, as guts, as genitals—because we are afraid, because we crave. The people who can help us get these things, we flatter; and those same people, we dread.

1.9.27 Someone once asked me to write to Rome on his behalf. In most people's eyes he had met with misfortune: once prominent and rich, he had since lost everything and was living here.

1.9.28 So I wrote on his behalf, in a humble tone. But when he read the letter, he handed it back to me and said, "I wanted some help from you, not pity. Nothing bad is happening to me."

1.9.29 In the same way Rufus, to test me, used to say, "This and that is going to happen to you at your master's hands."[33]

1.9.30 And when I answered, "Such is human life," he would say, "Then why should I go on petitioning him, when I can get the same things from you?"

33 Epictetus was still a slave at the time.

1.9.31 Really, if a person has something from himself, it's superfluous and pointless for him to get it from someone else.

1.9.32 So when I can get greatness of soul and nobility from myself, am I to get a farm from you, and money, or some office? Far from it! I won't be so blind to my own possessions.

1.9.33 But when someone is cowardly and abject, what else can you do for him but write letters as if for a dead man: "Grant us the corpse of so-and-so and a pint of his blood"?

1.9.34 For in truth that sort of person is a corpse and a pint of blood, and nothing more. If he were anything more, he'd realize that no one is unfortunate because of someone else.

## CHAPTER 10: TO THOSE SET ON ADVANCEMENT IN ROME

*If we worked at our task as hard as old men in Rome chase office, we might achieve something.*

1.10.1 If we were as intensely devoted to our own work as the old men in Rome are to the things they're keen on, perhaps we too would get something done.

1.10.2 I know a man older than I am, the one who is now in charge of the grain supply in Rome. When he passed through here on his way back from exile, what things he said to me! He ran down the life he'd led before, and promised that for the future, once he was back up there, he'd be keen on nothing but spending the rest of his life in quiet and tranquility. "For how much of it do I have left?"[34]

1.10.3 —And I told him, "You won't. The moment you get a whiff of Rome, you'll forget all this." And I told him that if he were given even a way into the palace, he'd push his way in, delighted and thanking God.

1.10.4 —"Epictetus," he said, "if you find me setting so much as one foot in the palace, think whatever you like of me."

1.10.5 Well, what did he do? Before he reached Rome, letters from Caesar met him on the road; and the moment he got them,

34 The prefect of the grain supply was one of the great imperial officials in Rome.

he forgot all that, and he has been piling up one thing on top of another ever since.

1.10.6 I'd like to stand beside him now and remind him of what he said as he passed through, and tell him, "How much better a prophet I am than you!"

1.10.7 What, then? Am I saying that the human creature isn't made for action? Far from it! But why aren't *we* people of action?

1.10.8 Take me, to start with. As soon as it's day, I remind myself a little of what I need to read over with my students. Then I immediately say to myself, "What do I care how so-and-so reads? The first thing is for me to get some sleep."

1.10.9 And yet how are their affairs like ours? If you look at what they do, you'll see. What else do they do all day but vote, debate, and deliberate about a bit of grain, a little plot of land, some "progress" of that kind?

1.10.10 Is it the same, then, to take a petition from someone and read, "I beg you to allow me to export a little grain," and to read, "I beg you to learn from Chrysippus what the government of the universe is, and what sort of place the rational creature has in it; and learn, too, who you are, and what your good and your bad consist in"?

1.10.11 Are these like those? Do they call for the same kind of effort? Is it equally shameful to neglect the one and the other?

1.10.12 What, then? Are we old men the only ones who slack off and nod? No—you young men do it far more.

1.10.13 Why, even we old men, when we see young people playing, get eager to join in the game ourselves. And much more, if I saw them wide awake and eager, would I be eager to join them in serious work myself.

## CHAPTER 11: ON FAMILY AFFECTION

*Epictetus shows a father who fled his sick daughter that his act was neither reasonable nor truly loving.*

1.11.1 When one of the officials came to see him, Epictetus asked him about his particular circumstances, and then asked whether he had children and a wife.

1.11.2 When the man said he did, he asked further: So how are you getting on with it? —Miserably, he said.

1.11.3 —And Epictetus: How so? People certainly don't marry and have children in order to be miserable, but rather to be happy.

1.11.4 —But I, he said, am in such a miserable state over my little children that the other day, when my little daughter was sick and seemed to be in danger, I couldn't bear even to be with her while she was ill. I ran off and stayed away until someone brought me word that she was all right.

1.11.5 —Well then, do you think you acted rightly? —I acted naturally, he said. —Well, convince me of that, he said—that it was natural—and I'll convince you that everything that happens according to nature happens rightly.

1.11.6 —This is something, he said, that all of us fathers go through, or most of us, anyway. —I don't dispute with you, he said, that it happens; the question between us is whether it's right.

1.11.7 Because on that reasoning you'd have to say that tumors, too, come about for the good of the body, because they happen, and in short that going wrong is natural, because nearly all of us, or most of us anyway, go wrong.

1.11.8 So you show me how it's natural. —I can't, he said. You show me instead how it isn't natural and doesn't happen rightly.

1.11.9 —And Epictetus said: Well, if we were investigating white things and black, what standard would we call in to tell them apart? —Sight, he said. —And if it were hot things and cold, hard and soft, what then? —Touch. —

1.11.10 So since we're in dispute about what is natural, and what happens rightly or not rightly, what standard would you have us adopt?

1.11.11 —I don't know, he said. —Well, not knowing the standard for colors and smells, or for flavors, is perhaps no great loss. But not knowing the standard for what is good and bad, and what is natural and unnatural for a human being—does that seem a small loss to you, for the person who doesn't know it?

1.11.12 —The very greatest. —Come on, tell me: everything that some people think fine and fitting—do they think it rightly? Can all the views that Jews and Syrians and Egyptians and Romans hold about food, as things stand, be right?

1.11.13 —How could they? —No, I think it's absolutely necessary: if the Egyptians' views are right, everyone else's aren't; if the Jews' are sound, everyone else's aren't.

1.11.14 —Of course. —And where there's not knowing, there's also ignorance and a lack of education in essential things.

1.11.15 —He agreed. —So now that you're aware of this, he said, from now on you'll be keen on nothing else, and set your mind on nothing else, than learning the standard for what is natural and using it to judge each particular case.

1.11.16 For the present, this is as much help as I can give you toward what you want.

1.11.17 Does affection for one's family seem to you to be natural and fine? —Of course. —Well then: is affection natural and fine, while being reasonable isn't fine?

1.11.18 —Not at all. —Then does reasonableness conflict with affection? —I don't think so. —Because if it did, then of two things in conflict, if one is natural, the other would have to be unnatural. Isn't that so? —Yes, he said.

1.11.19 —Then whatever we find to be at once affectionate and reasonable, we can confidently declare to be right and fine?

1.11.20 —Granted, he said. —Well then: that leaving your sick child, and going off after you've left her, isn't reasonable, I don't think you'll dispute. What remains for us to consider is whether it's affectionate. —Let's consider it, then. —

1.11.21 Since you felt affection for the child, then, did you do right to run away and leave her? And doesn't her mother love the child? —She certainly does.

1.11.22 —Then should her mother have left her too, or not? —She shouldn't. —What about the nurse? Does she love her? —She does, he said. —Then should she have left her too? —Not at all. —And the attendant? Doesn't he love her?[35]

1.11.23 —He does. —Then should he, too, have gone off and left her, so that the child was left all alone and helpless because of the great affection of you, her parents, and of those around her—or died in the arms of people who neither loved nor cared for her? —Heaven forbid.

1.11.24 —And yet isn't it unfair and inconsiderate, when someone thinks something fitting for himself because he is affectionate, not to allow the same to others who are just as affectionate?

1.11.25 —It would be absurd. —Come now: if you were sick, would you want your family—the others, and your children and your wife themselves—to be so affectionate that they left you alone and deserted?

1.11.26 —Not at all. —Would you pray to be so loved by your own people that, because of their excessive affection, you were always left alone when you were ill? Or, on those terms, would you rather pray to be loved by your enemies, if that were possible, so that they would be the ones to leave you alone? If so, the conclusion is that what you did was in no way affectionate.

1.11.27 What, then? Was there nothing that moved you and drove you to leave the child? How could that be? No, it was something like what moved a man in Rome to cover his head while the horse he was backing was running—and then, when it won against all expectation, he needed sponges to bring him round from his faint.

1.11.28 So what is this thing? The precise account perhaps doesn't belong to the present occasion. But it's enough to be con-

35 The attendant (παιδαγωγός) was a slave who looked after a child and escorted it about.

vinced of this—if what the philosophers say is sound—that we mustn't look for it somewhere outside, but that one and the same thing is in every case the cause of our doing something or not doing it, of saying something or not saying it, of being elated or downcast, of avoiding something or pursuing it—

1.11.29 the very thing that has now been the cause for both of us: for you, of coming to me and sitting here now listening; for me, of saying these things.

1.11.30 And what is that? Is it anything other than that it seemed right to us? —Nothing else. —And if things had appeared otherwise to us, what would we have done but what seemed right?

1.11.31 So for Achilles too, this was the cause of his grieving, not the death of Patroclus (someone else doesn't go through all this when his comrade dies),

1.11.32 but that it seemed right to him. And for you, the cause of running away then was just this, that it seemed right to you; and again, if you stay, it will be because it seemed right to you. And now you're going up to Rome because it seems right to you; and if you change your mind, you won't go.

1.11.33 In short, neither death nor exile nor pain nor anything else of the sort is the cause of our doing or not doing anything, but our opinions and judgments.

1.11.34 Am I convincing you of this or not? —You are, he said. —Well, as the causes are in each case, so are the results.

1.11.35 So whenever we do something wrongly, from this day on we'll blame nothing but the judgment we did it from, and we'll try to root it out and cut it away even more than tumors and abscesses from the body.

1.11.36 And in the same way we'll declare this same thing to be the cause of what we do rightly.

1.11.37 And we'll no longer blame a servant or a neighbor or a wife or children as the causes of any evils for us, since we're convinced that unless it seems to us that things are of a certain kind, we don't act accordingly; and whether it seems so or not is in our control, not in the control of external things.

1.11.38 —Yes, he said. —From this very day, then, we'll inspect and examine nothing else—what it's like or what state it's in—not our land, not our slaves, not our horses or dogs, but only our judgments. —I hope so, he said.

1.11.39 —So you see that you have to become a student—that creature everyone laughs at—if you really want to make an examination of your own judgments.

1.11.40 And that this isn't the work of a single hour or day, you realize yourself.

## CHAPTER 12: ON CONTENTMENT

*The educated person learns to want things to happen as they do, and so accepts every circumstance.*

1.12.1 About the gods, there are some who say that the divine doesn't even exist; others that it exists, but is idle and indifferent and exercises providence over nothing;

1.12.2 a third group, that it both exists and exercises providence, but over great and heavenly things, and over nothing on earth; a fourth, that it does so over earthly and human things as well, but only in general, and not for each individual too;

1.12.3 and a fifth—among them Odysseus and Socrates—who say, "nor do I escape your notice / when I move."[36]

1.12.4 Well before anything else, then, we have to examine each of these views and see whether it's soundly stated or not. For if there are no gods, how can following the gods be our goal?

1.12.5 And if they exist but care for nothing, how will that be sound either?

1.12.6 And even if they exist and do care, but nothing comes from them to human beings—and, by Zeus, to me in particular—how is it sound even so?

1.12.7 Having examined all this, then, the good and noble person has submitted his mind to the one who governs the whole, just as good citizens submit to the law of their city.

1.12.8 And the person being educated should come to his education with this aim: "How can I follow the gods in everything, how can I be content with the divine government, and how can I become free?"

1.12.9 For the free person is the one for whom everything happens according to his choice, and whom no one can hinder.

1.12.10 What, then? Is freedom recklessness? Far from it. Madness and freedom don't go together.

1.12.11 "But I want everything that seems good to me to come off, however it strikes me."

1.12.12 You're mad; you're out of your mind. Don't you know that freedom is something fine and worth having? But for me to want, any old way, [and] for whatever happens to strike me any old way to come about—that looks like being not only not fine, but the most shameful thing of all.

1.12.13 What do we do in the case of writing? Do I want to write the name "Dion" however I like? No: I'm taught to want to write it as it ought to be written. What about music? The same.[37]

1.12.14 And in general, wherever there is an art or a science? Otherwise knowing anything would be worthless, if it adapted itself to everyone's wishes.

1.12.15 Is it here alone, then, in the greatest and most important thing of all, freedom, that I'm allowed to want at random? Not at all. Being educated means precisely this: learning to want each thing just as it happens. And how does it happen? As the one who ordains it has ordained it.

1.12.16 And he has ordained that there be summer and winter, abundance and scarcity, excellence and vice, and all such opposites, for the harmony of the whole; and to each of us he has given a body and the parts of a body, and possessions, and companions.

1.12.17 It is with this ordering in mind, then, that we must come to be educated—not to change the conditions (that isn't given to us, and it wouldn't be better), but so that, with the things around

36 Homer, *Iliad* 10.279: Odysseus praying to Athena.
37 "Dion" is a stock name in Stoic examples, like "John Doe."

us being as they are and as their nature is, we may keep our own mind in harmony with what happens.

1.12.18 Why, can we escape other people? How could we? Well then, can we change them while we live with them? And who grants us that?

1.12.19 What's left, then? What means can be found for dealing with them? One by which they will do what seems right to them, while we are in accord with nature all the same.

1.12.20 But you can't stand any hardship and you're never satisfied. If you're alone, you call it desolation; if you're with people, you call them schemers and robbers; and you find fault with your own parents and children and brothers and neighbors.

1.12.21 When you're alone, you ought to call it quiet and freedom, and think of yourself as like the gods; and when you're with many, not call it a mob or an uproar or a nuisance, but a feast and a festival, and so accept everything contentedly. What, then, is the punishment for those who don't accept it?

1.12.22 To be just as they are. Is someone discontented with being alone? Let him be in desolation. Is someone discontented with his parents? Let him be a bad son, and grieve. Is he discontented with his children?

1.12.23 Let him be a bad father. "Throw him in prison!" What prison? The one he's in now. He's there against his will; and wherever someone is against his will, that is a prison for him. In the same way Socrates wasn't in prison: he was there willingly.

1.12.24 "So I have to have a lame leg!" Slave! Are you going to accuse the universe over one miserable little leg? Won't you make a present of it to the whole? Won't you give it up? Won't you gladly yield it to the one who gave it?

1.12.25 Will you be indignant and discontented with what Zeus has ordained—what he determined and ordained with the Fates, who were present and spinning the thread of your birth?

1.12.26 Don't you know how small a part you are compared with the whole? In body, that is; for in reason you are no worse than the gods, and no smaller. The greatness of reason isn't judged by length or height, but by judgments.

1.12.27 Won't you, then, place your good there, in that respect in which you are equal to the gods?

1.12.28 "Poor me, to have a father like this, and a mother like this!" Well? Were you allowed to step forward beforehand, make your choice, and say, "Let so-and-so and so-and-so come together at such-and-such an hour, so that I can be born"?

1.12.29 You weren't. Your parents had to exist first, and then you had to be born. From what sort of people?

1.12.30 From the sort they were. What, then? Since they're like that, have you been given no means of dealing with it? If you didn't know what you had the faculty of sight for, you'd be unfortunate and wretched if you shut your eyes when colors were put before you. But since you have greatness of soul and nobility to meet each of these things, and don't know it, aren't you even more unfortunate and wretched? Things suited to the faculty you have are put before you;

1.12.31 and you turn it away precisely when you ought to keep it open and seeing.

1.12.32 Why not thank the gods instead, that they've set you above all the things they didn't even make up to you, and made you accountable only for what is up to you? For your parents they've left you unaccountable;

1.12.33 for your brothers, they've left you unaccountable; for your body, unaccountable; for possessions, death, life.

1.12.34 What, then, have they made you accountable for? For the only thing that is up to you: the proper use of impressions.

1.12.35 So why do you drag onto yourself the things you're not accountable for? That is making trouble for yourself.

## CHAPTER 13: HOW TO DO EVERYTHING IN A WAY PLEASING TO THE GODS

*Eating justly and bearing with slaves, who are our kin, is how we please the gods.*

1.13.1 When someone asked how it's possible to eat in a way that pleases the gods, he said: If it's possible to eat justly, graciously,

fairly, with self-control and decorum, isn't it also possible to eat in a way that pleases the gods?

1.13.2 And when you've asked for hot water and your slave doesn't respond, or responds but brings it lukewarm, or isn't even to be found in the house—then not to get angry or burst with rage, isn't that pleasing to the gods?

1.13.3 —But how can anyone put up with people like that? —Slave! Won't you put up with your own brother, who has Zeus for his forefather, who has been born, like a son, of the same seed as you and of the same descent from above,

1.13.4 but if you've been stationed in some such superior position, will you immediately set yourself up as a tyrant? Won't you remember what you are and whom you rule—that they are kin, brothers by nature, the offspring of Zeus?

1.13.5 —But I have a deed of sale for them, and they don't have one for me. —Do you see where you're looking? At the earth, at the pit, at these wretched laws of the dead; and at the laws of the gods you don't look?

## CHAPTER 14: THAT GOD WATCHES OVER US ALL

*All things are united; God perceives every soul, and each person's guardian spirit never leaves him.*

1.14.1 When someone asked how a person could be convinced that everything he does is watched over by God, he said: Don't you think that all things are united?

1.14.2 —I do, he said. —Well, don't you think that earthly things are in sympathy with heavenly ones?

1.14.3 —I do, he said. —Otherwise, how is it that so regularly, as if at God's command, when he tells the plants to flower, they flower; when to sprout, they sprout; when to bear fruit, they bear it; when to ripen, they ripen; and when, again, to drop their fruit and shed their leaves, and to draw in on themselves and stay still and rest, they stay still and rest?

1.14.4 And how is it that, as the moon waxes and wanes and the sun approaches and withdraws, we see such variation in earthly things, and such change to their opposites?

1.14.5 Are plants and our bodies so bound up with the whole and in sympathy with it, and our souls not much more so?

1.14.6 And are our souls so bound up with God and joined to him, being parts and fragments of him, and yet God doesn't perceive their every movement as his own and of one nature with him?

1.14.7 You are able to reflect on the divine government and on each divine thing, and at the same time on human affairs; you can be moved by countless things at once, in your senses and in your thought, assenting to some, rejecting others or suspending judgment on them;

1.14.8 you keep in your soul so many imprints from so many and such varied things, and, moved by them, you arrive at ideas corresponding to the things that first made the imprint; you retain art after art, and memories of countless things;

1.14.9 and God isn't able to oversee all things, to be present with all, and to receive some communication from all?

1.14.10 The sun is able to light so great a part of the universe, leaving unlit only as little as can be covered by the shadow the earth casts. And the one who made the sun itself and drives it round—a small part of himself compared with the whole—he is unable to perceive all things?

1.14.11 But I, he says, can't keep track of all these things at once. —And does anyone tell you that you have power equal to Zeus?

1.14.12 Even so, he has nonetheless set beside each person, as a guardian, his own guardian spirit, and entrusted him to its keeping—a guardian that never sleeps and can't be deceived.

1.14.13 To what other guardian, better or more attentive, could he have entrusted each of us? So when you shut your doors and make it dark inside, remember never to say that you are alone;

1.14.14 for you aren't. God is inside, and your guardian spirit is too. And what need do they have of light to see what you're doing?

1.14.15 To this God you too ought to swear an oath, as soldiers do to Caesar. They, when they take their pay, swear to put Caesar's safety before everything; and you, who have been thought worthy of so many and such great gifts, won't swear—or, having sworn, won't keep to it?

1.14.16 And what will you swear? Never to disobey, never to accuse, never to find fault with anything he has given, never to do or suffer unwillingly anything that must be.

1.14.17 Is this oath like that one? There they swear to honor no one above Caesar; here, to honor themselves above all.

## CHAPTER 15: WHAT PHILOSOPHY PROMISES

*Philosophy promises nothing external; its material is one's own life, and its fruit takes time to ripen.*

1.15.1 When someone consulted him about how he could persuade his brother to stop being angry with him,

1.15.2 Philosophy, he said, doesn't promise to secure for a person anything external. Otherwise it would be taking on something outside its own proper material. As wood is the carpenter's material, and bronze the sculptor's, so the material of the art of living is each person's own life.

1.15.3 —What about my brother's life, then? —That, again, belongs to his own art; in relation to yours, it's one of the external things, like land, like health, like a good reputation. Philosophy promises none of these.

1.15.4 "In every circumstance I will keep the ruling center in accord with nature." —Whose? —"That of the one in whom I exist."[38]

1.15.5 —Then how can I stop him from being angry with me? —"Bring him to me and I'll talk to him; but to you I have nothing to say about his anger."

38 The "ruling center" (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν) is the command center of the mind, where impressions are judged and assent is given.

1.15.6 When the man consulting him said, This is what I'm asking: how I can be in accord with nature even if he isn't reconciled with me,

1.15.7 Nothing great, he said, comes into being all at once—not even a bunch of grapes or a fig. If you tell me now, "I want a fig," I'll answer, "That takes time." Let it flower first, then put out its fruit, then ripen.

1.15.8 So the fruit of a fig tree isn't brought to completion all at once, in a single hour—and you want to acquire the fruit of a human mind in so short a time and so easily? Don't expect it, not even if I tell you so.

## CHAPTER 16: ON PROVIDENCE

*Animals are provided for ready-made, and even small things show providence; our work is to sing hymns to God.*

1.16.1 Don't be surprised that for the other animals what the body needs has been provided ready-made—not only food and drink but a bed as well—and that they don't need shoes or bedding or clothes, while we need all these things in addition.

1.16.2 Creatures made not for their own sake but for service—it wouldn't have paid to make them in need of other things.

1.16.3 Just think what it would be like for us to have to worry not only about ourselves but about our sheep and donkeys too: how they'd get dressed, how they'd put on their shoes, how they'd eat, how they'd drink.

1.16.4 No—just as soldiers are ready for their general, shod, clothed, and armed, and it would be dreadful if the commander had to go round putting shoes and clothes on his thousand men, so nature too has made the creatures born for service ready and equipped, needing no further care.

1.16.5 That's how one small child with a stick can drive a flock of sheep.

1.16.6 But as it is, instead of giving thanks for this—that we don't have to give them the same care as ourselves—we complain to God about our own lot.

1.16.7 And yet, by Zeus and the gods, any single one of the things that exist would be enough to make you perceive providence—if you have any self-respect and gratitude, that is.

1.16.8 And don't start on the great things now. Just this: that milk comes from grass, and cheese from milk, and wool from skin—who is it that made these things, or thought them up? "No one," he says. What colossal obtuseness and shamelessness!

1.16.9 Come on, let's leave aside nature's main works and look at its side-works.

1.16.10 Is there anything more useless than the hair on a chin? Well then, hasn't nature made use even of this in the most fitting way it could? Hasn't it used it to distinguish male and female?

1.16.11 Doesn't the nature of each of us shout from far off, "I'm a man. Approach me this way, talk to me this way, don't look for anything else. Here are the signs"?

1.16.12 And again, with women, just as nature blended something softer into their voices, so it took away the hair. Oh no—the creature should have been left undistinguished, and each of us should have had to announce, "I'm a man"!

1.16.13 How fine the sign is, how becoming and dignified! How much finer than a cock's comb, how much more magnificent than a lion's mane!

1.16.14 That's why we ought to preserve the signs God has given; we ought not to throw them away, or, so far as it lies with us, confuse the sexes that have been distinguished.

1.16.15 Are these the only works of providence in us? And what words are enough to praise them as they deserve, or to set them before our eyes? If we had any sense, what else should we be doing, in public and in private, than hymning the divine, blessing it, and recounting its favors?

1.16.16 Shouldn't we, as we dig and plow and eat, sing this hymn to God: "Great is God, who has given us these tools to work the earth with"?

1.16.17 "Great is God, who has given us hands, and a throat to swallow with, and a belly, and the power to grow without noticing it, and to breathe while we sleep."

1.16.18 For each of these we ought to sing hymns, and to sing the greatest and most divine hymn of all for this: that he gave us the faculty of understanding these things and of using them methodically.

1.16.19 What, then? Since most of you have gone blind, shouldn't there be someone to fill this role and sing the hymn to God on behalf of everyone?

1.16.20 For what else can I do, a lame old man, but sing hymns to God? If I were a nightingale, I'd do what nightingales do; if a swan, what swans do.

1.16.21 But as it is, I'm a rational being: I must sing hymns to God. This is my work. I do it, and I won't desert this post as long as it's granted me; and I call on you to join me in this same song.

## CHAPTER 17: THAT LOGIC IS NECESSARY

*Reason must be articulated before it judges anything else; the true diviner reads that our choice is free.*

1.17.1 Since reason is what articulates and works out everything else, and it mustn't itself be left unarticulated, by what is it to be articulated?

1.17.2 Clearly, either by itself or by something else. And that something is either reason, or else it will be something superior to reason—which is impossible.

1.17.3 If it's reason, who in turn will articulate that? If it articulates itself, then so can the first. If we need yet another, this will go on without end and never stop.

1.17.4 "Yes, but treatment is more urgent," and so on. So you want to hear about that? Then listen.

1.17.5 But if you say to me, "I don't know whether your argument is true or false," and if I say something ambiguous and you tell me, "Make a distinction," I won't put up with you any longer; I'll say to you,

1.17.6 "But treatment is more urgent." That, I think, is why they put logic first—just as, before measuring grain, we first examine the measure.

1.17.7 If we don't first determine what a bushel is, and don't first determine what a scale is, how will we be able to measure or weigh anything?

1.17.8 So here, if we haven't learned and mastered the standard for everything else, the means by which everything else is learned, will we be able to master or learn anything else?

1.17.9 How could we? "Yes, but a bushel measure is just wood, and bears no fruit."

1.17.10 But it measures grain. "Logic, too, bears no fruit." We'll see about that. But even if one were to grant it, this is enough: logic distinguishes and examines everything else—measures and weighs it, you might say.

1.17.11 Who says this? Only Chrysippus and Zeno and Cleanthes?[39]

1.17.12 Doesn't Antisthenes say it? And who was it who wrote, "The beginning of education is the examination of names"? Doesn't Socrates say it? And of whom does Xenophon write that he began with the examination of names, of what each one means?[40]

1.17.13 Is this the great and wonderful thing, then—to understand Chrysippus, or explain him? And who says that? Then what is the wonderful thing?

1.17.14 To understand the will of nature. Well then: do you follow it on your own? Then what more do you need? For if it's true that everyone who does wrong does so unwillingly, and you have learned the truth, you must already be acting rightly.

1.17.15 But, by Zeus, I don't follow the will of nature. Who, then, explains it? Chrysippus, they say.

1.17.16 I go and look into what this interpreter of nature says. I start not to understand what he means; I look for someone to interpret him. "Look, examine what this means, just as if it were in Latin."

1.17.17 So what call is there here for the interpreter to put on airs? Chrysippus himself wouldn't be entitled to, if all he did was

39 Zeno of Citium founded the Stoic school around 300 BC; Cleanthes was his successor.

interpret the will of nature without following it himself. How much less the man who interprets him?

1.17.18 We don't need Chrysippus for his own sake, but so that we can follow nature. Nor do we need the diviner for his own sake, but because we think that through him we'll learn the future and the signs the gods give; nor the entrails for their own sake,

1.17.19 but because signs are given through them; nor do we revere the raven or the crow, but God, who gives signs through them.

1.17.20 So I come to this interpreter and diviner and say, "Inspect the entrails for me: what signs are given me?"

1.17.21 He takes them, spreads them open, and interprets: "Man, you have a choice that is by nature unhindered and unconstrained. That is written here in the entrails.

1.17.22 I'll show it to you first in the area of assent. Can anyone prevent you from assenting to what is true? No one. Can anyone force you to accept what is false?

1.17.23 No one. You see that in this area your faculty of choice is unhindered, unconstrained, unimpeded?

1.17.24 Come on, is it any different in the area of desire and impulse? What can overcome an impulse but another impulse? What can overcome desire and aversion but another desire and aversion?"

1.17.25 "But if someone," he says, "threatens me with death, he compels me." "It isn't the threat that compels you, but the fact that it seems better to you to do something of the sort than to die.

1.17.26 So again it was your own judgment that compelled you: that is, choice compelled choice.

1.17.27 For if God had made that part of himself which he detached and gave to us capable of being hindered or compelled, whether by himself or by anyone else, he would no longer be God, nor would he be caring for us as he should."

1.17.28 "This is what I find in the victims," he says. "These are the signs given you. If you want, you're free. If you want, you'll find fault with no one and accuse no one, and everything will happen according to your mind and God's at once."

1.17.29 It's for this prophecy that I go to this diviner and philosopher—not admiring him for his interpretation, but admiring what he interprets.

## CHAPTER 18: THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE ANGRY WITH WRONGDOERS

*Wrongdoers are mistaken about good and bad and deserve pity; prizing externals is what makes us angry.*

1.18.1 If what the philosophers say is true—that all people have one and the same starting point: that for assent it's the feeling that something is so, for dissent the feeling that it isn't, and, by Zeus, for suspending judgment the feeling that it's unclear,

1.18.2 and likewise for an impulse toward something it's the feeling that it's to my advantage; and that it's impossible to judge one thing advantageous and desire another, or to judge one thing our duty and feel an impulse toward another—then why are we still angry with most people?

1.18.3 —They're thieves, he says, and muggers. —What does it mean, that they're thieves and muggers? They're mistaken about what is good and bad. So should we be angry with them, or pity them?

1.18.4 Show them their mistake, and you'll see how they give up their wrongdoing. But if they don't see it, they have nothing higher to go by than what seems right to them.

1.18.5 "So shouldn't this robber and this adulterer be put to death?"

1.18.6 —Not at all; put it this way instead: "Shouldn't this man who is mistaken and deceived about the most important things, and blinded—not in the sight that tells white from black, but in the mind that tells good from bad—be put to death?"

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**40** Antisthenes, a follower of Socrates, was regarded as a forerunner of the Cynics.

1.18.7 Put it like that, and you'll realize how inhuman what you're saying is, and that it's just like saying, "Shouldn't this blind man be put to death, then, and the deaf one?"

1.18.8 For if the greatest harm is the loss of the greatest things, and the greatest thing in each of us is a choice of the right kind, and someone is deprived of this, why are you still angry with him?

1.18.9 Man, if you must be affected contrary to nature by other people's evils, pity him rather than hate him. Drop this habit of taking offense and hating.

1.18.10 Don't *those phrases that most of the* use: "So these cursed and loathsome *!" All right; but how did you suddenly get so wise*

1.18.11 that you're harsh with others? So why do we get angry? Because we prize the material things they take from us. Don't prize your clothes, and you're not angry with the thief; don't prize your wife's beauty, and you're not angry with the adulterer.

1.18.12 Understand that a thief and an adulterer have no place among the things that are yours, but only among what belongs to others and is not up to you. If you let these things go and count them as nothing, who are you still angry with? But as long as you prize them, be angry with yourself rather than with them. Look at it this way:

1.18.13 you have fine clothes, your neighbor doesn't; you have a window, and you want to air them. He doesn't know what a human being's good is, but imagines it's having fine clothes—the very thing you imagine too.

1.18.14 So is he not to come and take them? Look: when you show a cake to greedy people and gulp it all down yourself, you expect them not to snatch it? Don't provoke them; don't have a window; don't air your clothes.

1.18.15 The other day I myself had an iron lamp beside my household gods. I heard a noise at the window and ran down, and found the lamp had been taken. I reasoned that the man who took it had felt an understandable impulse. So what? "Tomorrow," I said, "you'll find an earthenware one."

1.18.16 A person loses only what he has. "I've lost my cloak." Yes, because you had a cloak. "I have a headache." You don't have a pain in your horns, do you? So why are you upset? Losses and pains apply only to the things we also possess.

1.18.17 "But the tyrant will chain me." Chain what? Your leg. "But he'll cut it off." Cut what off? Your neck. What, then, won't he chain or cut off? Your choice. That's why the ancients gave the command "Know yourself."

1.18.18 What, then? By the gods, we ought to practice on small things, and, starting from them, move on to greater ones.

1.18.19 "I have a headache." Don't say "Oh dear!" "I have an earache." Don't say "Oh dear!" I'm not saying you're not allowed to groan—just don't groan inside. And if your slave is slow bringing the bandage, don't yell and writhe and say, "Everyone hates me." Who wouldn't hate someone like that?

1.18.20 From now on, relying on these judgments, walk about upright and free—not relying on the size of your body, like an athlete. You shouldn't be unbeatable the way a donkey is.

1.18.21 Who, then, is unbeatable? The person whom nothing outside his choice can shake. Then I go through each circumstance in turn and study him as I would an athlete. "He has forced his way through the first round. What about the second? What if there's scorching heat?

1.18.22 What about at Olympia?" And here it's the same. If you put a bit of money in his way, he'll despise it. What if it's a pretty girl? What if it's in the dark? What if it's a bit of fame? What about abuse? What about praise? What about death?

1.18.23 He can overcome them all. What if there's scorching heat —I mean, what if he's drunk? What if he's depressed? What about when he's asleep? That's the man I call the invincible athlete.

## CHAPTER 19: HOW TO BEHAVE TOWARD TYRANTS

*A tyrant rules only body and property; judgments about externals are what make people court the powerful.*

1.19.1 When someone has some advantage, or thinks he has when he hasn't, it's absolutely inevitable, if he's uneducated, that he gets puffed up by it.

1.19.2 Straight away the tyrant says, "I am the most powerful man in the world." And what can you give me? Can you get me a desire that's unhindered? Where would you get it? Do you have one yourself? An aversion that never falls into what it avoids? Do you have one? An impulse that never goes wrong?

1.19.3 And where do you have any share in that? Come now: on a ship, do you trust yourself, or the person who knows? And in a chariot, whom do you trust but the person who knows?

1.19.4 And in the other arts? The same. So what can you do? "Everyone attends to me." Well, I attend to my plate too: I wash it and wipe it, and I drive in a peg for my oil flask. What of it? Are these things better than me? No, but they're of some use to me, so I attend to them. What else? Don't I attend to my donkey?

1.19.5 Don't I wash its feet? Don't I groom it? Don't you know that every man attends to himself, and to you just as he does to his donkey? Who attends to you as a human being? Show me.

1.19.6 Who wants to be like you? Who becomes your devoted follower, the way people did with Socrates? "But I can have your head cut off." Well said! I'd forgotten that I have to attend to you as I would to a fever or cholera, and set up an altar to you, just as in Rome there's an altar to Fever.[41]

1.19.7 So what is it that upsets and terrifies most people? The tyrant and his bodyguards? How could it be? Heaven forbid! What is free by nature can't be disturbed or hindered by anything except itself.

1.19.8 No, it's his judgments that disturb him. When the tyrant says to someone, "I'll chain your leg," the man who sets a high

value on his leg says, "No, have mercy!" The man who sets a high value on his own choice says, "If that looks more profitable to you, chain it." "Don't you care?"

1.19.9 "I don't care." "I'll show you who's master." "You? How? Zeus has set me free. Or do you think he was going to let his own son be made a slave? You're master of my corpse. Take it."

1.19.10 "So when you come to me, you aren't looking after me?" "No, I'm looking after myself. And if you want me to say I look after you too, I say it the way I look after my cooking pot."

1.19.11 This isn't selfishness. That's how the living creature is made: it does everything for its own sake. Even the sun does everything for its own sake, and so, for that matter, does Zeus himself.

1.19.12 But when he wants to be the Rain-Giver and the Fruit-Giver and the "father of men and gods," you see that he can't achieve these works or earn these titles unless he's useful to the common good.[42]

1.19.13 And in general he has made the nature of the rational creature such that it can attain none of its own goods unless it contributes something useful to the common good.

1.19.14 So doing everything for one's own sake no longer turns out to be unsociable.

1.19.15 What else do you expect? That someone should stand apart from himself and his own interest? Then how would there still be one and the same starting point for all creatures, their attachment to themselves?[43]

1.19.16 So what follows? When there are strange judgments underneath about things outside our choice, as though they were good and bad, it's absolutely inevitable that people will court tyrants.

1.19.17 And if only it were the tyrants alone, and not their chamberlains too! How does a man suddenly become wise when

41 Fever (Febris) was worshipped as a goddess in Rome, with a shrine on the Palatine.

42 Rain-Giver and Fruit-Giver were cult titles of Zeus; "father of men and gods" is Homer's phrase.

Caesar puts him in charge of the chamber pot? How is it that we immediately say, "Felicio talked such sense to me"?

1.19.18 I'd like to see him thrown off the dung heap, so that you'll think him a fool again.

1.19.19 Epaphroditus had a shoemaker whom he sold because he was useless. Then by some stroke of fortune the man was bought by one of Caesar's household and became Caesar's shoemaker. You should have seen how Epaphroditus honored him:

1.19.20 "How is my good Felicio doing?

1.19.21 I'm so fond of you." Then if any of us asked, "What's the master doing?" we were told, "He's consulting with Felicio about something."

1.19.22 Hadn't he sold him as useless? So who suddenly made him wise?

1.19.23 That's what it means to value something other than what lies in our choice.

1.19.24 "He's been granted a tribuneship." Everyone who meets him congratulates him: one kisses his eyes, another his neck, his slaves his hands. He goes home and finds the lamps being lit. He goes up to the Capitol and offers a sacrifice.

1.19.25 Now who has ever offered a sacrifice for having desired well? For having had an impulse in accordance with nature? We thank the gods for whatever we place our good in.

1.19.26 Today someone was talking to me about a priesthood of Augustus. I say to him, "Man, drop the whole thing. You'll spend a great deal for nothing."[44]

1.19.27 —"But those who draw up contracts of sale," he says, "will write down my name." —"So will you be standing there to tell the people reading them, 'That's me they've written'?

1.19.28 And even if you could be there for all of them now, what will you do when you die?" —"My name will remain." —"Write it

43 The Stoics taught that every creature's first impulse is an attachment (οἰκείωσις) to itself and its own preservation.

44 Local priesthoods of the imperial cult were costly honors; official documents were dated by the priest's name.

on a stone and it'll remain. But come now, outside Nicopolis who'll remember you?"[45]

1.19.29 —"But I'll wear a gold crown." —"If you've set your heart on a crown, get one made of roses and put that on. It'll look more elegant."

## CHAPTER 20: HOW REASON STUDIES ITSELF

*Reason must test its own impressions, as an assayer tests coins, and the chief doctrine is brief.*

1.20.1 Every art and every faculty exists to study certain things that are its chief objects.

1.20.2 Now when the art is itself of the same kind as the things it studies, it necessarily studies itself as well. But when it's of a different kind, it can't study itself.

1.20.3 Shoemaking, for instance, deals with leather, but is itself entirely distinct from the material of leather. That's why it doesn't study itself.

1.20.4 Grammar, again, deals with speech written in letters. Is grammar itself speech written in letters? Not at all. That's why it can't study itself. Now reason: what on earth has nature given it to us for?

1.20.5 For the right use of impressions. And what is reason itself? A system made up of impressions of a certain kind. So by nature it also studies itself.

1.20.6 Again, understanding: what has it come to study? Things good, bad, and neither. What, then, is understanding itself? A good. And what is folly? A bad. So you see that it necessarily studies both itself and its opposite?

1.20.7 That's why the greatest and first task of the philosopher is to test impressions and tell them apart, and to accept none that hasn't been tested.

1.20.8 Look at money, where we think something matters to us. See how we've even invented an art for it, and how many means

45 Nicopolis, in Epirus in northwestern Greece, was where Epictetus had his school.

the assayer uses to test a coin—sight, touch, smell, and finally hearing:

1.20.9 he throws the denarius down and listens to the ring, and he isn't satisfied with a single ring; he pays such close attention that he becomes a musician.

1.20.10 In the same way, where we think it makes a difference whether we go wrong or not, we bring great attention to telling apart the things that can lead us astray.

1.20.11 But when it comes to our poor ruling center, we yawn and doze and accept every impression that comes along—because the loss doesn't show.

1.20.12 So when you want to know how slack you are about good and bad things and how eager about indifferents, consider how you feel about being blinded and how you feel about being deceived, and you'll realize that you're far from feeling as you should about good and bad.

1.20.13 "But it takes a great deal of preparation, and a great deal of work and study." Well, what of it? Do you expect to acquire the greatest of arts on a small outlay?

1.20.14 And yet the chief doctrine of the philosophers is very short. If you want to know, read Zeno's works and you'll see.

1.20.15 What's so long about saying that the goal is to follow the gods, and that the essence of the good is the right use of impressions?

1.20.16 Ask, "What, then, is God, and what is an impression? And what is the nature of the individual, and what is the nature of the whole?"

1.20.17 Now it's long. And if Epicurus comes along and says that the good must lie in the flesh, it gets long again, and we have to hear what the chief thing in us is, what our substance and essence are. Since it isn't likely that a snail's good lies in its shell, is it likely that a human being's does?

1.20.18 And you yourself, Epicurus, what do you have that's more authoritative? What is it in you that deliberates, that examines each thing, [that] judges about the flesh itself that it is the chief thing?

1.20.19 And why do you light your lamp and toil for our sake and write such enormous books? So that we won't be ignorant of the truth? Who are we? What are we to you? And so the argument gets long.

## CHAPTER 21: TO THOSE WHO WANT TO BE ADMIRED

*Someone with a firm footing in life has no need of admiration from people he thinks are mad.*

1.21.1 When someone has the right footing in life, he doesn't gape at things outside himself.

1.21.2 "Man, what do you want to happen to you? For my part, I'm content if my desire and aversion accord with nature, if I use impulse and repulsion as I was born to, and purpose and design and assent. So why do you walk around in front of us as if you'd swallowed a skewer?"

1.21.3 "I'd like the people who meet me to admire me, and to follow me around shouting, 'What a great philosopher!'"

1.21.4 Who are these people you want to be admired by? Aren't they the ones you usually say are mad? Well then? You want to be admired by madmen?

## CHAPTER 22: ON PRECONCEPTIONS

*Everyone shares the same preconceptions; conflict arises in applying them, and education teaches how.*

1.22.1 Preconceptions are common to all people, and one preconception doesn't conflict with another. Which of us doesn't assume that the good is beneficial and worth choosing, and that we must seek and pursue it in every circumstance? Which of us doesn't assume that the just is fine and fitting?

1.22.2 When, then, does the conflict arise? In applying the preconceptions to particular cases,

1.22.3 when one person says, "He did well, he's brave," and another says, "No, he's out of his mind." That's where people's conflict with one another comes from.

1.22.4 This is the conflict among Jews and Syrians and Egyptians and Romans: not over whether holiness should be put before everything and pursued in every case, but over whether this particular thing, eating pork, is holy or unholy.

1.22.5 You'll find this conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles too. Call them up before us. What do you say, Agamemnon? Shouldn't what is proper and right be done?

1.22.6 "Of course it should." And what do you say, Achilles? Doesn't it please you that what is right should be done? "Nothing pleases me more." Now apply your preconceptions. That's where the conflict begins.

1.22.7 One says, "I shouldn't have to give Chryseis back to her father." The other says, "Oh yes, you should." One of them is certainly misapplying the preconception of what is proper.[46]

1.22.8 Again, one says, "Very well: if I have to give back Chryseis, I must take the prize of one of you," and the other, "So you'd take the woman I love?" "Yes, yours," he says. "Am I to be the only one—" "And am I to be the only one who has nothing?" That's how conflict arises.

1.22.9 What, then, is education? Learning to apply our natural preconceptions to particular cases in accordance with nature, and further, to distinguish

1.22.10 that of the things that exist, some are up to us and others are not up to us. Up to us are choice and all the acts of choice; not up to us are the body, the parts of the body, possessions, parents, brothers, children, country—in short, all those we share our lives with.

1.22.11 Where, then, shall we place the good? To what kind of thing shall we apply it? To what is up to us?

1.22.12 —Then health and soundness of body and life aren't good, and neither are children or parents or country? —And who's going to put up with you?

1.22.13 So let's move it back here again. Is it possible, then, for someone who is harmed and misses out on good things to be

46 In *Iliad* 1, Agamemnon must return his captive Chryseis to her father, a priest of Apollo, and seizes Achilles' captive Briseis instead.

happy? —It isn't. —And to keep up the right conduct toward those he shares his life with? How is that possible?

1.22.14 For I'm made to pursue my own advantage. If it's to my advantage to have a farm, it's to my advantage to take it from my neighbor too; if it's to my advantage to have a cloak, it's to my advantage to steal it from the baths too. From this come wars, civil strife, tyrannies, conspiracies.

1.22.15 And how will I still be able to do my duty toward Zeus? If I'm harmed and unlucky, he doesn't care about me. Then it's "What have I got to do with him, if he can't help me?" and again, "What have I got to do with him, if he wants me to be in the state I'm in?" From then on I start to hate him.

1.22.16 Why, then, do we build temples, why set up statues, as if to evil spirits, as if Zeus were a Fever? And how is he still the Savior, and how the Rain-Giver, and how the Fruit-Giver? And yet if we place the essence of the good somewhere here, all this follows.

1.22.17 What, then, are we to do? —This is the inquiry of someone who truly does philosophy and is in labor with it. Right now I can't see what is good and what is bad. Aren't I mad?

1.22.18 Yes. But if I place the good somewhere here, in what lies in our choice, everyone will laugh at me. Some gray-haired old man wearing lots of gold rings will come along, shake his head, and say, "Listen to me, child. One should do philosophy, yes, but one should also have a brain. This is nonsense. You learn syllogisms from the philosophers,

1.22.19 but what you ought to do, you know better than the philosophers." Man, then why are you scolding me, if I know?

1.22.20 What am I to say to this slave?

1.22.21 If I keep quiet, he'll burst. So I have to say, "Forgive me as you'd forgive lovers. I'm not myself. I'm mad."

## CHAPTER 23: AGAINST EPICURUS

*Epicurus advises against raising children, yet even sheep and wolves do not abandon their young.*

1.23.1 Even Epicurus understands that we're social by nature; but once he has placed our good in the shell, he can't say anything else.

1.23.2 For again he holds firmly to this: that nothing detached from the essence of the good should be admired or accepted. And he's right to hold to it.

1.23.3 Why, then, are we so suspicious, as though we had no natural affection for our offspring? Why do you advise the wise man against raising children? Why are you afraid that because of them he'll fall into grief?

1.23.4 Does he fall into grief over the mouse that's raised in his house? What does he care if some tiny mouse cries its heart out indoors?

1.23.5 But he knows that once a baby is born, it's no longer up to us not to love it and worry about it.

1.23.6 That's why he says that a man of sense won't take part in politics either: he knows what a politician has to do. Because of course, if you're going to live as though among flies, what's to stop you?

1.23.7 And yet, knowing all this, he dares to say, "Let's not raise children." But a sheep doesn't abandon its offspring, nor does a wolf—and a human being does?

1.23.8 What do you want? For us to be as stupid as sheep? Even they don't abandon their young. As savage as wolves? Even they don't abandon theirs.

1.23.9 Come now, who listens to you when he sees his little child fallen on the ground and crying?

1.23.10 For my part, I think that even if your mother and father had foreseen that you were going to say these things, they still wouldn't have abandoned you.[47]

## CHAPTER 24: HOW TO STRUGGLE AGAINST DIFFICULTIES

*Difficulties are God's sparring partners; Diogenes the scout reports that nothing out there is to be feared.*

1.24.1 It's difficulties that show what men are. So from now on, when a difficulty befalls you, remember that God, like a trainer, has matched you with a rough young opponent. —

1.24.2 What for? someone says. —So that you can become an Olympic victor; and that doesn't happen without sweat. It seems to me that no one has had a better difficulty than yours, if you're willing to use it as an athlete uses a young sparring partner.

1.24.3 And now we're sending you to Rome as a scout. But nobody sends a coward as a scout, the kind who, if he merely hears a noise or sees a shadow anywhere, comes running back in a panic, saying the enemy is already here.

1.24.4 So now if you too come back and tell us, "Things in Rome are frightening: death is terrible, exile is terrible, abuse is terrible, poverty is terrible; run, gentlemen, the enemy is here!",

1.24.5 we'll say to you, "Go away, and make your prophecies to yourself. Our only mistake was sending a scout like you."

1.24.6 Diogenes, who was sent out as a scout before you, brought us back a different report. He says that death is not bad, since it isn't shameful either; he says that a bad reputation is the noise of madmen.[48]

1.24.7 And what things this scout has said about pain, about pleasure, about poverty! He says that being naked is better than any purple-bordered robe; he says that sleeping on the bare ground is the softest bed.

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47 Unwanted newborns in the ancient world were often exposed, that is, left out to die.

48 Diogenes of Sinope (fourth century BC), the founder of Cynicism, famous for living in deliberate poverty.

1.24.8 And as proof of each claim he offers his own confidence, his tranquility, his freedom, and then his body too, gleaming and compact.

1.24.9 "No enemy," he says, "is anywhere near. Everything is full of peace." How so, Diogenes? "Look," he says. "Have I been hit? Have I been wounded? Have I run away from anyone?"

1.24.10 That's what a scout should be. But you come back and tell us one thing after another. Won't you go back and take a more careful look, without the cowardice?

1.24.11 What am I to do, then? —What do you do when you get off a ship? You don't take the rudder, do you, or the oars? What do you take, then? Your own things: your oil flask, your bag. So now too, if you remember what's yours, you'll never lay claim to what belongs to others.

1.24.12 He tells you, "Take off your broad stripe." There: a narrow stripe. "Take that off too." There: just a cloak. "Take off the cloak."[49]

1.24.13 "There: I'm naked." "But you make me envious." Then take my whole body. When I can throw my body to a man, am I still afraid of him?

1.24.14 But he won't leave me as his heir. Well? Had I forgotten that none of these things was mine? Then in what sense do we call them ours? As we call the bed in an inn ours. So if the innkeeper dies and leaves you the beds, fine; but if he leaves them to someone else, that person will have them and you'll look for another bed;

1.24.15 and if you don't find one, you'll sleep on the ground—only do it with confidence, snoring away, and remembering that tragedies find their place among the rich and among kings and tyrants, and no poor man fills a part in a tragedy except as a member of the chorus.

1.24.16 Kings start out in good fortune: "Hang the palace with garlands!" Then, around the third or fourth act: "Alas, Cithaeron,

49 A narrow purple stripe marked a knight, the rank below a senator.

why did you receive me?" Slave, where are your crowns, where's your diadem?[50]

1.24.17 Are your bodyguards no help to you now?

1.24.18 So when you approach one of those people, remember this: you're approaching a tragic figure—not the actor, but Oedipus himself.

1.24.19 "But so-and-so is blessed: he goes about with a large crowd around him." Well, I too take my place among the crowd and go about with many people.

1.24.20 The main point: remember, the door is open. Don't be more cowardly than children. When the game doesn't please them, they say, "I won't play anymore"; so you too, when things seem to you to have come to that, say "I won't play anymore" and leave. But if you stay, don't whine.

## CHAPTER 25: ON THE SAME SUBJECT

*Keep what is yours, play the game while it pleases, and remember that the door is open.*

1.25.1 If these things are true, and we aren't being silly or play-acting when we say that a human being's good lies in choice, and his bad too, and that everything else is nothing to us, why are we still upset, why still afraid? Over the things we care about, no one has any power;

1.25.2 and the things others have power over, we don't care about. What trouble do we have left?

1.25.3 —But give me instructions. —What instructions am I to give you? Hasn't Zeus given you instructions? Hasn't he given you what is yours free from hindrance and obstruction, and what isn't yours subject to hindrance and obstruction?

1.25.4 So what order did you bring with you when you came from there, what edict? Guard what is yours by every means; don't reach for what belongs to others. Your trustworthiness is yours . Who, then, can take these away from you? Who but you

50 The second line is Oedipus' cry in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*; Mount Cithaeron is where he was left as a baby.

will prevent you from using them? And how would you? When you care about what isn't yours, you've lost what is yours.

1.25.5 With advice and orders like these from Zeus, what further ones do you want from me? Am I greater than he is, more trustworthy?

1.25.6 If you keep these, do you need any others besides? Hasn't he given you these orders? Bring out your preconceptions, bring out the proofs of the philosophers, bring out what you've often heard, bring out what you've said yourself, bring out what you've read, bring out what you've practiced.

1.25.7 Up to what point, then, is it right to keep these and not break up the game?

1.25.8 As long as it's going on pleasantly. At the Saturnalia, someone has been chosen king by lot, since it was decided to play this game. He gives orders: "You, drink; you, mix the wine; you, sing; you, go; you, come." I obey, so that the game won't break up on my account.[51]

1.25.9 "But you: believe that you're in a bad way." I don't believe it. And who will force me to believe it?

1.25.10 Again, we've agreed to play the story of Agamemnon and Achilles. The one assigned to be Agamemnon says to me, "Go to Achilles and drag Briseis away." I go.

1.25.11 "Come." I come. For as we behave in hypothetical arguments, so we should behave in life too. "Let it be night." So be it. "Well then, is it day?" No, because I've accepted the hypothesis that it's night.

1.25.12 "Let it be that you believe it's night." So be it. "Now actually believe that it's night." That doesn't follow from the hypothesis.

1.25.13 So it is here too. "Let it be that you're unfortunate." So be it. "Are you unlucky, then?" Yes. "Well then, are you wretched?" Yes. "Now actually believe that you're in a bad way." That doesn't follow from the hypothesis. And there's another who forbids me.

51 The Saturnalia was the Roman December festival of license, at which a mock king was chosen by lot to rule the party.

1.25.14 How far, then, should we obey such orders? As far as it's profitable—that is, as long as I preserve what is fitting and consistent.

1.25.15 Now some people are sour and have delicate stomachs, and they say, "I can't dine with this fellow and put up with him telling us every day how he fought in Mysia: 'I've told you, brother, how I climbed the hill; now I start to be besieged again...'"

1.25.16 Another says, "I'd rather have dinner and listen to him prattle on as much as he likes."

1.25.17 You too: weigh up these valuations. Only don't do anything feeling burdened or crushed, or believing that you're in a bad way. No one forces you to that.

1.25.18 Has someone made smoke in the room? If it's moderate, I'll stay; if there's too much, I go out. Remember this and hold fast to it: the door is open.

1.25.19 But "Don't live in Nicopolis." I don't live there. "Nor in Athens." Not in Athens either. "Nor in Rome." Not in Rome either. "Live on Gyara." I live there. But living on Gyara seems to me like a lot of smoke.[52]

1.25.20 I withdraw to where no one will prevent me from living. That dwelling is open to everyone.

1.25.21 And past the last little tunic, that is, the body, no one can do anything to me.

1.25.22 That's why Demetrius said to Nero, "You threaten me with death, but nature threatens you."[53]

1.25.23 But if I admire my body, I've handed myself over as a slave; if my bit of property, as a slave.

1.25.24 For I immediately give away against myself what I can be caught by. As with the snake that draws in its head, I say, "Strike that part of him he's guarding." And you too should know that

52 Gyara, a barren little island in the Aegean, was a place of exile under the emperors.

53 Demetrius the Cynic, a friend of Seneca, taught in Rome under Nero and was later exiled.

whatever you want to guard, that's where your master will attack you.

1.25.25 If you remember these things, whom will you still flatter or fear?

1.25.26 But I want to sit where the senators sit. —Do you see that you're putting yourself in a tight spot, that you're squeezing yourself?

1.25.27 —How else will I get a good view in the amphitheater? —Man, don't watch, and you won't be squeezed. Why make trouble for yourself? Or wait a little, and when the show is over, sit down in the senators' seats and sun yourself.

1.25.28 In general, remember this: we squeeze ourselves, we put ourselves in tight spots—that is, our judgments squeeze us and hem us in.

1.25.29 After all, what is being insulted, in itself? Stand beside a stone and insult it. What will you achieve? So if someone listens like a stone, what good is it to the one insulting him? But if the insulter has the weakness of the insulted as a stepping-stone, then he gets somewhere.

1.25.30 "Tear his clothes off him." Why do you say "him"? Take the cloak and tear it off.

1.25.31 "I've insulted you." Much good may it do you. Socrates practiced these things, and that's why he always kept one and the same face. But we would rather train and practice anything than how to be unhindered and free.

1.25.32 "The philosophers say paradoxical things." Aren't there paradoxes in the other arts? And what's more paradoxical than piercing someone's eye so that he can see? If someone said that to a person with no knowledge of medicine, wouldn't he laugh at the speaker?[54]

1.25.33 So what's surprising if in philosophy too many truths seem paradoxical to those who have no experience of it?

54 Ancient surgeons treated cataracts by pushing the clouded lens aside with a needle.

## CHAPTER 26: WHAT THE LAW OF LIFE IS

*The law of life is to act consistently with nature, and philosophy begins with awareness of one's weakness.*

1.26.1 When someone was reading hypothetical arguments, he said: This too is a law of hypotheticals, that we must accept what follows from the hypothesis. But far more important is this law of life: to do what follows from nature.

1.26.2 For if in every matter and circumstance we want to keep to what is in accordance with nature, clearly we must aim in everything neither to let what follows escape us nor to accept what conflicts with it.

1.26.3 So the philosophers first train us in theory, where it's easier, and only then lead us on to harder things. In theory there's nothing pulling us back from following what we're taught, but in the business of life there are many distractions. So the man who says he wants to start with life is ridiculous;

1.26.4 it isn't easy to begin with the harder things.

1.26.5 And this is the defense one should offer parents who are angry that their children are doing philosophy: "Very well, father, I go wrong and don't know what's fitting and proper for me. If it can't be learned or taught, why do you blame me? If it can be taught, teach me; and if you can't, let me learn it from those who claim to know.

1.26.6 What do you think? That I fall into what's bad and miss what's good on purpose? Heaven forbid! So what is the cause of my going wrong?

1.26.7 Ignorance. Don't you want me to get rid of my ignorance? Whom has anger ever taught to steer a ship, or to play music? So do you think I'll learn how to live because of your anger?"

1.26.8 Only someone who has come to philosophy with that aim may say these things.

1.26.9 But if someone reads this material and goes to the philosophers only because he wants to show off at a dinner party that

he knows hypothetical arguments, what is he doing but trying to get the senator reclining next to him to admire him?

1.26.10 For that's where the really great resources are, and the riches here look like toys there. That's why it's hard there to master one's impressions, where the things that knock you off balance are so great.

1.26.11 I know someone who wept, clasping Epaphroditus' knees and saying he was in misery, since he had nothing left but a million and a half.

1.26.12 And what did Epaphroditus do? Laugh at him, as you're doing? No: he said in amazement, "Poor man, how did you keep silent, how did you bear it?"

1.26.13 When he had thrown the student reading the hypothetical arguments into confusion, and the man who had set him the reading laughed, he said: You're laughing at yourself. You didn't train the young man first or find out whether he could follow these things; you're just using him as a reader.

1.26.14 Well then, he said, do we entrust praise and blame to a mind that can't follow the analysis of a conjunctive proposition, do we entrust it with judging what is done well or badly? If it speaks ill of someone, does that person take notice, and if it praises someone, is he elated—when it can't find what follows in such small matters?

1.26.15 This, then, is the beginning of philosophy: awareness of the state of one's own ruling center. For once someone recognizes that it's weak, he'll no longer want to use it for great things.

1.26.16 As it is, some people who can't swallow a morsel buy a whole treatise and set about eating it. So they throw up or get indigestion; then come cramps and fluxes and fevers. They should have considered first whether they could manage it.

1.26.17 In theory it's easy to refute someone who doesn't know; but in matters of life no one submits himself to refutation, and we hate the one who has refuted us.

1.26.18 But Socrates used to say that we should not live an unexamined life.

## CHAPTER 27: IN HOW MANY WAYS IMPRESSIONS ARISE, AND WHAT AIDS TO HAVE READY

*Impressions deceive in four ways; opposite habits and firm preconceptions are the remedies.*

1.27.1 Impressions come to us in four ways: either things are so and appear so; or they aren't, and don't appear to be; or they are, and don't appear to be; or they aren't, and appear to be.

1.27.2 So in all these cases, hitting the mark is the job of the educated person. Whatever is troubling us, that's what we must bring help to. If Pyrrhonian and Academic sophisms are what trouble us, let's bring help against them;[55]

1.27.3 if it's the persuasiveness of things, which makes some things appear good when they aren't, let's look for help there; if it's habit that troubles us, we must try to find help against that.

1.27.4 So what help can be found against habit?

1.27.5 The opposite habit. You hear ordinary people saying, "Poor man, he's dead. His father is gone, his mother; he was cut off, and before his time, too, and in a foreign land."

1.27.6 Listen to the arguments on the other side, tear yourself away from these voices, set the opposite habit against the habit. Against sophistical arguments we need logic and practice and exercise in it; against the persuasiveness of things we need to keep our preconceptions clear, polished, and ready to hand.

1.27.7 When death appears to be bad, have ready the thought that it's our duty to avoid bad things, and that death is inevitable. For what am I to do?

1.27.8 Where am I to escape it? Suppose I'm Sarpedon, son of Zeus, so that I could nobly say, "I'm going out, and I want either to win the prize for valor myself or to give someone else the chance to win it; if I can't succeed at something myself, I won't begrudge someone else doing something noble." Suppose that's

55 The Pyrrhonists, followers of Pyrrho of Elis (c. 360–270 BC), were skeptics like the Academics.

beyond us: doesn't this other thing at least fall within our reach? [56]

1.27.9 And where can I escape death? Show me the country, show me the people I can go to whom it doesn't visit, show me a magic charm. If I don't have one, what do you want me to do?

1.27.10 I can't escape death. Am I not to escape the fear of it, then, but die mourning and trembling? For this is how passion is born: wanting something and not having it happen.

1.27.11 So if I can change external things to suit my own wish, I change them; if not, I want to blind whoever stands in my way.

1.27.12 For it's human nature not to put up with being deprived of the good, not to put up with falling into the bad.

1.27.13 And then finally, when I can neither change the circumstances nor blind the one in my way, I sit and groan and abuse whomever I can, Zeus and the other gods. For if they don't care about me, what have I got to do with them?

1.27.14 "Yes, but you'll be impious." So what will I get that's worse than what I have now? In sum, remember this: unless piety and self-interest coincide, piety can't be preserved in anyone. Don't these things seem urgent?

1.27.15 Let the Pyrrhonist and the Academic come and oppose me. For my part, I have no leisure for these things, and I can't argue the case for common experience.

1.27.16 Even if I had a little lawsuit about a plot of land, I'd call in someone else to plead for me. So what am I content with on this subject?

1.27.17 How perception comes about—whether through the whole or from a part—perhaps I don't know how to explain; both views trouble me. But that you and I are not the same person, I know very precisely.

1.27.18 How do I know? When I want to swallow something, I never carry the morsel there, but here; when I want to take bread, I've never taken the broom, but always go for the bread as if at a target.

56 Sarpedon, a son of Zeus fighting for Troy, speaks this way to his comrade in *Iliad* 12.

1.27.19 And you who abolish the senses, do you yourselves do anything different? Which of you, wanting to go to the baths, has gone to the mill instead?

1.27.20 —Well then? Shouldn't we, as far as we can, hold on to these things too—preserving common experience and fortifying ourselves against the arguments against it?

1.27.21 —And who says otherwise? But that's for someone who can, who has the leisure. The one who is trembling and upset and whose heart is breaking inside should spend his time on something else.

## CHAPTER 28: THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE ANGRY WITH PEOPLE, AND WHAT IS SMALL AND GREAT IN HUMAN LIFE

*Everyone acts on what appears to him; the great losses are of self-respect and trust, not cities.*

1.28.1 What is the cause of our assenting to something? That it appears to be so.

1.28.2 So it's impossible to assent to what appears not to be so. Why? Because this is the nature of the mind: to nod yes to what is true, to be dissatisfied with what is false, and to suspend judgment about what is unclear.

1.28.3 What's the proof of this? "Be convinced, if you can, that it's night right now." Impossible. "Stop being convinced that it's day." Impossible. "Be convinced, or stop being convinced, that the number of stars is even." Impossible.

1.28.4 So when someone assents to what is false, know that he didn't want to assent to what is false—"every soul is deprived of truth against its will," as Plato says—but the falsehood seemed true to him.[57]

1.28.5 Come now, in actions what do we have corresponding to the true and the false here? Duty and what is contrary to duty, the beneficial and the harmful, what suits me and what doesn't, and so on.

57 Plato, *Sophist* 228c; Epictetus quotes the saying often.

1.28.6 "So can't someone think a thing is to his advantage and still not choose it?" He can't.

1.28.7 What about the woman who says: "I understand what evil I'm about to do, / but my rage is stronger than my better counsels"? It's because she thinks this very thing—indulging her rage and taking revenge on her husband—more advantageous than saving her children.[58]

1.28.8 "Yes, but she's deceived." Show her clearly that she's deceived and she won't do it. But as long as you don't show her, what can she follow except what appears to her?

1.28.9 Nothing. So why are you angry with her, because the poor woman has gone astray about the most important things and been turned from a human being into a viper? Why not rather, if anything, pity her? As we pity the blind and the lame, why not pity those blinded and lamed in what matters most?

1.28.10 Whoever clearly remembers this—that for a human being the measure of every action is what appears to him (and it either appears rightly or wrongly: if rightly, he's blameless; if wrongly, he himself pays the penalty, since it's impossible for the one who goes astray to be one person and the one harmed another)—will be angry with no one, annoyed with no one, will abuse no one, blame no one, hate no one, take offense at no one.

1.28.11 So even such great and terrible deeds have this origin, what appears? This and no other.

1.28.12 The *Iliad* is nothing but an impression and the use of impressions. It appeared right to Alexander to carry off Menelaus' wife; it appeared right to Helen to follow him.[59]

1.28.13 Now if it had appeared to Menelaus that it was a gain to be rid of such a wife, what would have happened? We'd have lost not only the *Iliad* but the *Odyssey* too. —

1.28.14 So such great things hang on so small a matter? —And what do you call "such great things"? Wars and civil strife and

58 Medea in Euripides' play, before she kills her children to punish her husband Jason.

59 Alexander is another name for Paris, the Trojan prince who carried off Helen.

the deaths of many men and the razing of cities? And what's so great about those? —Nothing? —

1.28.15 What's great about many cattle dying, and many sheep, and many nests of swallows or storks being burned and destroyed?

1.28.16 —So these things are like those? —Very much alike. Human bodies perished—and so did those of cattle and sheep. Human dwellings were burned—and so were storks' nests.

1.28.17 What's great or terrible about that? Or show me how a man's house differs from a stork's nest as a dwelling.

1.28.18 —So a stork and a human being are alike? —What are you saying? In body, very much alike. [Except that the houses are built of beams and tiles and bricks, and the nest of sticks and mud.]

1.28.19 So a human being differs from a stork in nothing? —Heaven forbid! But he doesn't differ in these things. —In what, then, does he differ?

1.28.20 —Look and you'll find that he differs in something else. See whether it isn't in understanding what he does, whether it isn't in his sociability, his trustworthiness, his self-respect, his steadfastness, his intelligence.

1.28.21 Where, then, are the great bad and the great good in human beings? Where the difference is. If this is preserved and stays well walled in, and his self-respect, trustworthiness and intelligence aren't destroyed, then the man himself is preserved; but if any of these is lost or taken by siege, then the man himself is lost too. That is where the great things are.

1.28.22 Did Alexander come to grief in a great way, as they say, when the Greeks attacked, and when they sacked Troy, and when his brothers were dying?

1.28.23 Not at all: no one comes to grief through what someone else does. What was being sacked then was storks' nests. His real downfall came when he lost the man of self-respect, the trustworthy man, the man who honored his host, the decent man.

1.28.24 When did Achilles come to grief? When Patroclus died? Heaven forbid! It was when he got angry, when he wept over a

girl, when he forgot that he was there not to acquire mistresses but to make war.

1.28.25 Those are human downfalls; that is the siege, that is the razing of the city: when right judgments are torn down, when those things are destroyed.

1.28.26 —So when women are carried off and children taken captive, and the men themselves are slaughtered, aren't these things bad?

1.28.27 —Where do you get this extra opinion from? Teach me too. —No: where do you get the idea that they aren't bad?

1.28.28 —Let's go to the standards; bring out the preconceptions.

This is why one can't marvel enough at what goes on. When we want to judge weights, we don't judge at random; when we judge what is straight and what is crooked, not at random either;

1.28.29 in short, where it matters to us to know the truth in a given area, none of us will ever do anything at random.

1.28.30 But where the first and only cause lies of acting rightly or going wrong, of life flowing smoothly or roughly, of misfortune or good fortune, there alone are we careless and rash. Nowhere anything like a scale, nowhere anything like a ruler: something appears, and at once I act on what appeared.

1.28.31 Am I better than Agamemnon or Achilles, so that, while they did and suffered such terrible things by following what appeared to them, what appears wouldn't be enough to do the same to me?

1.28.32 And what tragedy has any other origin? Euripides' *Atreus* —what is it? What appeared. Sophocles' *Oedipus*—what is it? What appeared. The *Phoenix*?

1.28.33 What appeared. The *Hippolytus*? What appeared. So what kind of person do you think takes no care of this? And what do we call those who follow every appearance? —Madmen. —And are we doing anything different?

## CHAPTER 29: ON STEADINESS

*The good lies in choice, so threats touch only the body; the educated person is God's witness.*

1.29.1 The essence of the good is a certain kind of choice; the essence of the bad, a certain kind of choice.

1.29.2 What, then, are external things? Materials for choice, in dealing with which it will attain its own good or bad. How will it attain the good?

1.29.3 If it doesn't marvel at the materials. For judgments about the materials, if they are right, make choice good; if crooked and distorted, bad.

1.29.4 This is the law God has laid down, and he says, "If you want something good, get it from yourself." You say, "No, from someone else." No: from yourself.

1.29.5 So when the tyrant threatens me instead of inviting me, I say, "Whom is he threatening?" If he says, "I'll put you in chains," I say, "He's threatening my hands and feet."

1.29.6 If he says, "I'll cut your head off," I say, "He's threatening my neck." If he says, "I'll throw you in prison," "He's threatening my whole miserable flesh." And if he threatens exile, the same.

1.29.7 —So he isn't threatening you at all? —If I'm convinced that these things are nothing to me, not at all. But if I'm afraid of any of them, it's me he's threatening.

1.29.8 So whom am I afraid of? The master of what? Of the things up to me? There's no such person. Of the things not up to me? And what do I care about them?

1.29.9 So do you philosophers teach contempt for kings? —Heaven forbid! Which of us teaches anyone to dispute with them over the things they have power over?

1.29.10 Take my body, take my property, take my reputation, take the people around me. If I persuade any of them to dispute you for these, then you really can accuse me.

1.29.11 "Yes, but I want to rule your judgments too." And who gave you that power?

1.29.12 How can you conquer another person's judgment? "By applying fear to it," he says, "I'll conquer it." You don't realize that it conquered itself; it wasn't conquered by anything else. Nothing else can conquer choice, except choice itself.

1.29.13 That's why God's law is the strongest and most just: let the better always prevail over the worse.

1.29.14 "Ten are stronger than one." For what? For chaining, for killing, for dragging off wherever they like, for taking away what a man has. So the ten beat the one in the respect in which they are stronger.

1.29.15 In what, then, are they worse? If the one has right judgments and they don't. Well then? Can they win in this? How could they? If we stand on a scale, mustn't the heavier pull it down?

1.29.16 So Socrates had to suffer these things at the hands of the Athenians? —Slave, why do you say "Socrates"? Say it as the matter really is: so Socrates' poor body had to be carried off and dragged to prison by those who were stronger, and someone had to give hemlock to Socrates' poor body, and it had to grow cold?

1.29.17 Does that seem astonishing to you, unjust? Is that why you blame God? Did Socrates, then, have nothing in exchange for these things? Where did the essence of the good lie for him?

1.29.18 Whom shall we listen to, you or him? And what does he say? "Anytus and Meletus can kill me, but they can't harm me." And again: "If this is what pleases God, so be it."[60]

1.29.19 But show me that someone with worse judgments gets the better of someone who is better in his judgments. You won't show it; not even close. For this is the law of nature and of God: let the better always prevail over the worse. In what? In that in which it is better.

1.29.20 One body is stronger than another, the many than the one, the thief than the one who isn't a thief.

1.29.21 That's why I lost my lamp too: in staying awake, the thief was better than I was. But he paid a steep price for that lamp: for

60 Anytus and Meletus were among Socrates' accusers at his trial in 399 BC.

a lamp he became a thief, for a lamp untrustworthy, for a lamp a brute. That seemed profitable to him.

1.29.22 All right. But someone has grabbed me by the cloak and is dragging me into the marketplace, and then others shout, "Philosopher, what good have your judgments done you? Look, you're being dragged off to prison; look, you're about to have your head cut off."

1.29.23 And what introductory course could I have taken so that, if someone stronger grabs my cloak, I won't be dragged? So that, if ten men pull me about and throw me into prison, I won't be thrown in?

1.29.24 Have I learned nothing else, then? I've learned to see that whatever happens, if it's outside my choice, is nothing to me.

1.29.25 Hasn't that done you any good, then? So why look for the benefit anywhere but in what you learned?

1.29.26 So, sitting in prison, I say, "This man shouting these things doesn't hear what the words mean or follow what's being said, and he has never cared at all to know what philosophers say or do. Let him be."

1.29.27 "But come out of prison again." If you no longer need me in prison, I come out; if you need me again, I'll go back in.

1.29.28 For how long? As long as reason chooses that I stay with my body. When it doesn't, take it, and good health to you.

1.29.29 Only not irrationally, only not out of weakness, not on any passing pretext. For again, God doesn't want that: he needs such a world, and such beings living on the earth. But if he sounds the retreat, as he did for Socrates, we must obey the one who gives the signal, as we would a general.

1.29.30 Well then? Should we say these things to the crowd? — What for?

1.29.31 Isn't it enough to be persuaded oneself? When children come up to us clapping and say, "Today is the good Saturnalia," do we say, "These things aren't good"? Not at all: we clap along with them.

1.29.32 So you too, when you can't change someone's mind, recognize that he's a child and clap along with him; and if you don't want to do that, just keep quiet.

1.29.33 We must remember these things, and when we're called into some such difficulty, know that the moment has come to show whether we've been educated.

### THE CONTEST CALLS

*A student leaving school should welcome hardship as his chance to show what he has learned.*

1.29.34 For a young man going from school into a difficulty is like someone who has practiced analyzing syllogisms: if someone puts an easy one to him, he says, "Give me one that's cleverly tangled instead, so I can get some exercise." And athletes, too, are unhappy with lightweight young sparring partners:

1.29.35 "He can't lift me," he says. Now there's a young man with real talent. But not you: when the moment calls, apparently you have to weep and say, "I wanted to go on learning." Learning what? If you didn't learn these things [not] to show them in action, what did you learn them for?

1.29.36 I'd expect one of you sitting here to be in agony inside himself and saying, "Why doesn't a crisis like the one that came to him come to me now? Am I to waste away sitting in a corner when I could be crowned at Olympia? When will someone announce a contest like that for me?" That's how you should all feel.

1.29.37 Among Caesar's gladiators there are some who are indignant that nobody brings them out or matches them against anyone, and they pray to God and go to the managers begging to fight. And will none of you turn out to be like that?

1.29.38 I'd like to sail over for just this purpose and see what my athlete is doing, how he's working at his assigned theme.

1.29.39 "I don't want this sort of theme," he says. What, is it up to you to take whatever theme you like? You've been given a body like this, parents like these, brothers like these, a country like

this, a position in it like this; and then you come and tell me, "Change my theme." Well then, don't you have the resources to make use of what you've been given?

1.29.40 "It's yours to set the problem, mine to work at it well." But no: "Don't give me this kind of conditional premise, give me that kind; don't draw this conclusion, draw that one."

1.29.41 Perhaps a time will come when tragic actors think they are their masks and boots and trailing robes. Man, these are your material and your theme.

1.29.42 Say something, so we know whether you're a tragic actor or a clown; everything else the two have in common.

1.29.43 That's why, if someone takes away his boots and his mask and brings him on stage as a mere shade, is the tragic actor lost, or does he remain? If he has a voice, he remains.

1.29.44 So too here. "Take a governorship." I take it, and having taken it I show how an educated man conducts himself.

1.29.45 "Take off the broad stripe, put on rags, and come forward in that role." What of it? Haven't I been given the chance to bring a fine voice to that too?

1.29.46 "How do you come on stage now, then?" As a witness summoned by God.

1.29.47 "Come, you, and bear witness for me; for you are worthy to be brought forward as a witness by me. Is anything outside choice good or bad? Do I harm anyone? Have I made each person's benefit depend on someone else, and not on himself?"

1.29.48 What testimony do you give God? "I'm in a terrible state, Lord, and unlucky; nobody cares about me, nobody gives me anything, everyone blames me and speaks ill of me."

1.29.49 Is this the testimony you're going to give, disgracing the summons he issued—because he honored you with this honor and thought you worthy to be brought forward as so important a witness?

1.29.50 But the one with authority has declared, "I judge you to be impious and unholy." What has happened to you? "I've been judged impious and unholy."

1.29.51 Nothing else? "Nothing." Now if he had passed judgment on some conditional proposition and declared, "I judge the proposition 'If it is day, it is light' to be false," what would have happened to the conditional? Who is being judged here, who has been condemned? The conditional, or the man who was deceived about it?

1.29.52 So who on earth is this man with the authority to declare anything about you? Does he know what is pious or impious? Has he studied it? Learned it? Where? From whom?

1.29.53 And then a musician pays him no attention when he declares that the highest string is the lowest, nor does a geometer, if he rules that the lines drawn from the center to the circumference aren't equal;

1.29.54 and will the truly educated man pay any attention to an uneducated person ruling on what is holy and unholy, unjust and just? What an injustice on the part of the educated that would be! Is this, then, what you learned here?

1.29.55 Won't you leave the little arguments about these things to others, to lazy little men, so they can sit in a corner collecting their little fees, or grumbling that nobody gives them anything—while you step forward and put to use what you've learned?

1.29.56 It isn't little arguments that are lacking now; the books of the Stoics are crammed with them. What is lacking, then? The one who will use them, who will bear witness to the arguments by what he does.

1.29.57 Take up this role for me, so that we no longer use ancient examples in the school but have an example from our own time too.

1.29.58 Whose business is it, then, to be a spectator of these things? The one who has leisure. For the human being is an animal that loves to watch.

1.29.59 But it's shameful to watch these things the way runaway slaves do. One should sit undistracted and listen now to a tragic actor, now to a lyre-player—not the way they do. One of them stops and applauds the actor, and at the same moment glances

around; then if anyone says the word "master," they're instantly in a flurry and upset.

1.29.60 It's shameful for philosophers, too, to watch the works of nature like that. For what is a master? A human being isn't master of a human being; death and life, pleasure and pain are the masters.

1.29.61 Because, without these, bring me Caesar and you'll see how steady I am. But when he comes with them, thundering and lightning, and I'm afraid of them, what else have I done but recognize my master, like the runaway?

1.29.62 And as long as I get some respite from these things, I'm like a runaway watching a play: I bathe, I drink, I sing—but all of it in fear and misery.

1.29.63 But if I free myself from my masters—that is, from the things that make masters fearsome—what trouble do I have any more, what master?

1.29.64 What then? Should we proclaim this to everyone? —No; we should make allowances for laymen and say, "This man is recommending to me what he thinks is good for himself. I forgive him."

1.29.65 Socrates, too, forgave the jailer who wept because he was about to drink the poison, and said, "How nobly he's wept for us!"

1.29.66 Does he say to him, then, "That's why we sent the women away"? No, he says that to his friends, to those able to hear it; the jailer he humors like a child.

## CHAPTER 30: WHAT TO HAVE READY IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

*Before the powerful, remember that another sees from above, and that everything outside choice is indifferent.*

1.30.1 Whenever you go in to see one of the powerful, remember that there is another who sees from above what is happening, and that you must please him rather than this man.

1.30.2 So he asks you: "Exile, prison, chains, death, disgrace—what did you call them in the school?" "Indifferents."

1.30.3 "And what do you call them now? Have they changed at all?" "No." "Have you changed, then?" "No." "Tell me, then, what things are indifferent." "Things outside our choice." "Tell me what follows, too."

1.30.4 "Things outside our choice are nothing to me." "Tell me also what you people held to be goods." "Choice of the right kind, and the use of impressions." "And the goal?" "To follow you."

1.30.5 "Do you still say this now?" "I say the same now." Then go in with confidence, remembering these things, and you'll see what a young man who has trained in what he should is like among people who haven't.

1.30.6 For my part, by the gods, I imagine you'll feel something like this: "Why were we making such huge, elaborate preparations for nothing?"

1.30.7 "Is this what power was? Is this what the anterooms, the chamberlains, the sword-bearers amounted to? Was it for this I listened to all those lectures? This was nothing, and I was preparing as if for something great."

# Book II

*Confidence and caution; tranquillity; finding our duties in our roles; the beginning of philosophy; fighting impressions; friendship.*

## CHAPTER 1: THAT CONFIDENCE DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH CAUTION

*Be confident about things outside our choice and cautious about things within it; death is a bogeyman.*

2.1.1 What the philosophers maintain may perhaps seem paradoxical to some; still, let's examine as best we can whether it's true that we should do everything at once cautiously and confidently.

2.1.2 For caution seems somehow to be the opposite of confidence, and opposites can't possibly coexist.

2.1.3 But what many find paradoxical on this topic depends, I think, on something like this: if we claimed that caution and confidence should be applied to the same things, people would be right to accuse us of combining what can't be combined.

2.1.4 As it is, what's so strange about the claim? For if the things we've often said and often demonstrated are sound—that the essence of the good lies in the use of impressions, and likewise that of the bad, while things outside our choice admit the nature neither of the bad nor of the good—

2.1.5 what paradox are the philosophers maintaining when they say, "Where things outside choice are concerned, have confidence; where things within choice are concerned, have caution"?

2.1.6 For if the bad lies in a bad choice, it's right to use caution toward these things alone; and if things outside our choice and

not up to us are nothing to us, we should use confidence toward them.

2.1.7 And so we'll be cautious and confident at the same time—yes, by Zeus, confident because of our caution. For by being cautious about what is really bad, we'll end up confident about what isn't.

2.1.8 As it is, we go through what deer go through: when the does take fright and flee the feathers, where do they turn, where do they retreat to as a safe place? To the nets. And so they perish, having got what's frightening and what's safe the wrong way round.[1]

2.1.9 We're the same. Where do we use fear? On things outside our choice. And where, on the other hand, do we carry on confidently, as if there were nothing to fear? In things within our choice.

2.1.10 Being deceived, acting rashly, doing something shameless, desiring something with shameful lust—none of it matters to us, so long as we hit the mark in things outside our choice. But where there's death or exile or pain or disgrace, there we're ready to retreat, there we're in a flurry.

2.1.11 And so, as you'd expect of people who go wrong about the most important things, we turn what is naturally confident into rashness, recklessness, brazenness, shamelessness, and what is naturally cautious and self-respecting into cowardice and abjectness, full of fears and disturbances.

2.1.12 For if someone moves his caution to where choice and the acts of choice are, then the moment he wants to be cautious he'll also have his aversion in his own power. But if he puts it where things not up to us and outside our choice are, directing his aversion at what is in others' power, he will necessarily be afraid, be unsettled, be disturbed.

2.1.13 For it isn't death or pain that is frightening, but the fear of pain or death. That's why we praise the one who said, "Death is not the terrible thing, but dying shamefully."

2.1.14 So our confidence ought to be turned toward death, and our caution toward the fear of death. As it is, we do the opposite: toward death, flight; toward our judgment about it, heedlessness, carelessness, indifference.

2.1.15 Socrates was right to call these things bogeymen. For just as masks seem terrible and frightening to children through inexperience, we react in much the same way to events, and for no other reason than children do to bogeymen.

2.1.16 For what is a child? Ignorance. What is a child? Lack of learning. Since where a child does know, it's no worse off than we are.

2.1.17 What is death? A bogeyman. Turn it around and take a good look: see, it doesn't bite. The poor body has to be separated from the little breath, as it was separated before, either now or later. So why are you upset if it's now? If not now, then later.

2.1.18 Why? So that the cycle of the universe may be completed; for it needs things present, things to come, and things already accomplished.

2.1.19 What is pain? A bogeyman. Turn it around and take a good look. The poor flesh is moved roughly, then smoothly again. If it doesn't profit you, the door is open; if it does, bear it.

2.1.20 For in every situation the door must be open; and then we have no trouble.

2.1.21 What, then, is the fruit of these judgments? The one that ought to be finest and most fitting for those who are truly being educated: tranquility, fearlessness, freedom.

2.1.22 For on these matters we shouldn't trust the many, who say that only the free may be educated, but rather the philosophers, who say that only the educated are free.

2.1.23 —How's that? —Like this: is freedom anything other than being able to live as we wish? "Nothing else." Tell me, then, people: do you wish to live going wrong? "We don't." Then no one who goes wrong is free.

2.1.24 Do you wish to live in fear, in grief, in disturbance? "Not at all." So no one who is afraid, or grieving, or disturbed is free;

1 Hunters strung cords hung with feathers to scare deer toward the nets.

but whoever is rid of griefs and fears and disturbances is, by the same road, rid of slavery too.

2.1.25 So how can we trust you any longer, dearest lawgivers? "We allow no one to be educated except the free"? For the philosophers say, "We allow no one to be free except the educated" — that is, God doesn't allow it.

2.1.26 —So when someone turns his own slave around before the praetor, has he done nothing? —He's done something. —What? — He's turned his own slave around before the praetor. —Nothing else? —Yes: he also has to pay the five percent tax on him.[2]

2.1.27 —What then? Hasn't the one this was done to become free? —No more than he's become free of disturbance.

2.1.28 Because you, who can turn others around—have you no master? Not money, not a girl, not a boy, not the tyrant, not some friend of the tyrant? Then why do you tremble when you go off to some situation like that?

2.1.29 That's why I often say, "Practice these things and keep them ready to hand: toward what you should be confident and toward what cautious—confident toward things outside our choice, cautious about things within it."

2.1.30 —But haven't I read you my work? Don't you know what I can do?

2.1.31 —Do in what? In fancy little phrases. Keep your little phrases! Show me how you stand with regard to desire and aversion—whether you fail to get what you want, whether you fall into what you don't want. As for those little periods of yours, if you've any sense, you'll take them off somewhere and blot them out.

2.1.32 —What? Didn't Socrates write? —Who wrote as much? But how? Since he couldn't always have someone to test his judgments or to be tested by him in turn, he tested and examined himself, and was always working through some one preconception in a practical way.

2.1.33 That's what a philosopher writes. Fancy phrases, and the method I'm talking about, he leaves to others—to the insensible

or the blessed, to those at leisure because of their tranquility, or to those who in their folly take no account of what follows.

2.1.34 And now, when the moment calls, will you go off and show those things, and read them out, and show off? "Look how I compose dialogues!"

2.1.35 Don't, man; say this instead: "Look how I don't fail to get what I desire. Look how I don't fall into what I avoid. Bring on death and you'll see; bring on pains, bring on prison, bring on disgrace, bring on condemnation."

2.1.36 That's the display of a young man who has come from school. Leave the rest to others; let nobody ever hear a word from you about them, and if anyone praises you for them, don't put up with it; seem to be nobody and to know nothing.

2.1.37 Let it be clear you know only this: how never to fail to get what you desire and never to fall into what you avoid.

2.1.38 Let others practice lawsuits, others problems, others syllogisms; you practice dying, being chained, being tortured, being exiled.

2.1.39 Do all this with confidence, trusting in the one who called you to it, who judged you worthy of this post; stationed in it, you'll show what a rational ruling center can do when it's drawn up against the forces outside our choice.

2.1.40 And so that paradox will no longer seem either impossible or paradoxical: that one must be cautious and confident at the same time—confident toward things outside our choice, cautious in things within it.

## CHAPTER 2: ON TRANQUILLITY

*Going to court, decide whether you are guarding your choice or your body, and do not waver between them.*

2.2.1 You who are off to court, see what you want to preserve and where you want to succeed.

2 In Roman manumission the master turned the slave around before a magistrate, and a tax of one twentieth of the slave's value was due.

2.2.2 For if you want to keep your choice in accordance with nature, you have complete security, complete ease; you have no trouble.

2.2.3 For if you want to preserve what is up to you, which is self-governing and free by nature, and are content with that, what else do you care about? Who is master of these things, who can take them away?

2.2.4 If you want to be self-respecting and trustworthy, who won't let you? If you want not to be hindered or compelled, who will compel you to desire what you don't think you should, who to avoid what doesn't seem so to you?

2.2.5 But what? He'll do things to you that seem frightening; but how can he make you suffer them while you're trying to avoid them?

2.2.6 So when desire and aversion are up to you, what else do you care about?

2.2.7 This is your introduction, this your narrative, this your proof, this your victory, this your peroration, this your acclaim.

2.2.8 That's why Socrates said to the man reminding him to prepare for his trial, "Don't you think I've been preparing for it my whole life?"

2.2.9 —"What sort of preparation?" —"I've guarded what is up to me," he says. —"How so?" —"I have never done anything wrong, in private or in public."

2.2.10 But if you want to preserve outward things too—your poor body, your bit of property, your little standing—I tell you: start right now making every preparation possible, and then consider both the character of the judge and your opponent.

2.2.11 If you have to clasp knees, clasp knees; if weep, weep; if wail, wail.

2.2.12 For once you've made what is yours subordinate to outward things, be a slave from then on, and don't pull against it, wanting to be a slave one moment and not wanting to the next,

2.2.13 but simply and with your whole mind be one thing or the other: free or slave, educated or uneducated, a thoroughbred gamecock or a craven one. Either hold out under the blows until

you die, or give up at once. Don't let it be your lot to take a great many blows and give up afterward.

2.2.14 If that's shameful, draw the distinction right now: "Where is the nature of bad and good? Where truth is. Where truth and nature are, there caution belongs; where truth is, there confidence belongs, where nature is."

2.2.15 Because do you think that if Socrates had wanted to preserve outward things, he'd have come forward and said, "Anytus and Meletus can kill me, but they can't harm me"?

2.2.16 Was he such a fool as not to see that this road doesn't lead there, but somewhere else? Why is it, then, that he takes no account of them and even provokes them?

2.2.17 Like my friend Heraclitus: he had a little lawsuit about a bit of land in Rhodes, and after proving to the judges that he was in the right, he came to his peroration and said, "But I won't beg you, nor do I care what judgment you'll give; it's you rather than I who are on trial."[3]

2.2.18 And so he wrecked his little case. What need was there? Just don't beg; don't add, "And I'm not begging." Unless it's the right moment to provoke the judges on purpose, as it was for Socrates.

2.2.19 And you, if you're preparing a peroration like that, why go up to speak at all, why answer the summons?

2.2.20 For if you want to be crucified, wait, and the cross will come. But if reason decides that you should answer the summons and do your part to persuade, you must do what follows from that—while still keeping what is your own.

2.2.21 That's why it's ridiculous, too, to say, "Give me some advice." What advice should I give you? Say rather, "Make my mind able to adapt to whatever happens."

2.2.22 Because the other is like an illiterate man saying, "Tell me what to write when I'm set some name."

2.2.23 For if I say "Dion," and then the teacher comes along and sets him not Dion's name but Theon's, what will happen?

2.2.24 What will he write? But if you've practiced writing, you're prepared for whatever is dictated; if not, what advice can I give you now? For if circumstances dictate something else, what will you say or do?

2.2.25 So remember this general principle and you won't be at a loss for advice. But if you gape after outward things, you'll inevitably be tossed up and down at your master's will.

2.2.26 And who is master? Whoever has power over any of the things you're eager for or trying to avoid.

## CHAPTER 3: TO THOSE WHO RECOMMEND PEOPLE TO PHILOSOPHERS

*As Diogenes said, a good man needs no letter of recommendation to someone able to judge.*

2.3.1 Diogenes put it well to the man who asked him for a letter of recommendation: "That you're a man," he said, "he'll know as soon as he sees you. Whether you're good or bad he'll know if he has the skill to tell the good from the bad; and if he hasn't, he won't know even if I write to him ten thousand times."

2.3.2 It's as if a drachma asked to be recommended to someone so as to be tested. If he's an assayer of silver, you'll recommend yourself.

2.3.3 So in life, too, we ought to have something like what we have for silver, so that I can say, as the assayer says, "Bring me any drachma you like and I'll tell you what it is."

2.3.4 And with syllogisms I can say, "Bring me any one you like and I'll distinguish for you the one that can be analyzed from the one that can't." Why? Because I know how to analyze syllogisms; I have the ability that someone able to recognize correct reasoning about syllogisms must have.

2.3.5 But in life, what do I do? Now I call a thing good, now bad. What's the cause? The opposite of what it is with syllogisms: ignorance and inexperience.

3 Not the early philosopher, but an acquaintance of Epictetus otherwise unknown.

## CHAPTER 4: TO A MAN ONCE CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

*The adulterer destroys trustworthiness, neighborliness and friendship, and cannot hide behind talk of women held in common.*

2.4.1 As he was saying that man is born for trustworthiness, and that whoever overturns it overturns what is distinctive of man, in came one of those reputed to be men of letters, who had once been caught in adultery in the city.

2.4.2 And he said: But if we set aside this trustworthiness we're born for and make designs on our neighbor's wife, what are we doing? What else but destroying and doing away with something? With what? With the trustworthy man, the self-respecting man, the man of piety.

2.4.3 Only these? Aren't we doing away with neighborliness, and friendship, and the city? What place are we assigning ourselves? What am I to treat you as, man? As a neighbor, as a friend? What sort? As a citizen? What shall I trust you with?

2.4.4 Now if you were a pot so rotten that it couldn't be used for anything, you'd be thrown out on the dunghill, and nobody would pick you up even from there;

2.4.5 but if, being a man, you can't fill any human place, what shall we do with you? Granted you can't hold the place of a friend—can you hold that of a slave? And who will trust you? So won't you consent to be thrown out on some dunghill yourself, like a useless pot, like dung?

2.4.6 Then you'll say, "Nobody pays any attention to me, a man of letters!" That's because you're bad and useless. It's as if wasps complained that nobody pays attention to them, but everyone runs away from them, and anyone who can swats them and knocks them down.

2.4.7 You have a sting that throws anyone you strike into trouble and pain. What do you want us to do with you? There's nowhere to put you.

2.4.8 What then? Aren't women common property by nature? I say so too. And the roast piglet is common to the guests; but

once it's been divided into portions, go on, if you like, and grab your neighbor's portion, steal it on the sly, or slip your hand down beside him and nibble, and if you can't tear off any meat, grease your fingers and lick them. A fine fellow to drink and dine with—a real Socratic![4]

2.4.9 Come on, isn't the theater common to the citizens? So when they've taken their seats, go on, if you like, and throw one of them out.

2.4.10 In the same way, women too are common by nature. But once the lawgiver, like a host at dinner, has distributed them, won't you look for your own portion, instead of snatching and nibbling at someone else's?

2.4.11 "But I'm a man of letters, and I understand Archedemus." Well then, understand Archedemus and be an adulterer and untrustworthy, and instead of a man, a wolf or an ape. What's to stop you?[5]

## CHAPTER 5: HOW GREATNESS OF MIND CAN GO WITH CAREFULNESS

*Materials are indifferent, but their use is not; Socrates at his trial played like a skilled ballplayer.*

2.5.1 Materials are indifferent, but the use of them is not indifferent.

2.5.2 How, then, is one to preserve steadiness and calm and at the same time carefulness—neither careless nor slapdash?

2.5.3 By imitating dice players. The counters are indifferent, the dice are indifferent; how do I know how they'll fall? But to use carefully and skillfully the way they've fallen—that is my job.

2.5.4 So in life, too, the principal task is this: distinguish things, separate them, and say, "Externals are not up to me; choice is up to me.

4 Plato's *Republic* and the early Stoics proposed that wives be held in common; the adulterer is appealing to such doctrines.

5 Archedemus of Tarsus was a Stoic philosopher of the second century BC.

2.5.5 Where shall I look for the good and the bad? Within, in what is mine." But in what belongs to others, never call anything good or bad, benefit or harm, or anything of the sort.

2.5.6 What then? Should we use these things carelessly? Not at all. For that, again, is bad for our choice, and so contrary to [its] nature.

2.5.7 Rather, carefully, because the use is not indifferent, and at the same time steadily and calmly, because the material is not what matters.

2.5.8 For where what matters is, there nobody can hinder or compel me. Where I can be hindered and compelled, getting those things isn't up to me and isn't good or bad; but the use of them is either bad or good, and that is up to me.

2.5.9 It's hard to mix and combine these—the carefulness of someone attached to materials and the steadiness of someone who pays them no heed—but it isn't impossible. Otherwise happiness would be impossible.

2.5.10 It's like what we do on a voyage. What can I do? Choose the captain, the sailors, the day, the moment.

2.5.11 Then a storm strikes. What's it to me any more? My part has been done. The problem belongs to someone else—the captain. But now the ship is sinking.

2.5.12 What can I do, then? The only thing I can: I drown without fear, not screaming or accusing God, but knowing that what has come into being must also perish.

2.5.13 For I am not eternity, but a human being, a part of the whole as an hour is of the day. I must come on like the hour and pass like an hour.

2.5.14 So what difference does it make to me how I pass—by drowning or by fever? For I have to pass by something of the sort.

2.5.15 You'll see skilled ballplayers doing this too. None of them fusses about the ball as something good or bad, but about throwing and catching.

2.5.16 That's where the timing lies, the skill, the speed, the good judgment: I can catch it without even holding out my cloak, and he catches it whenever I throw.

2.5.17 But if we catch or throw it anxious and afraid, what game is left? Where will anyone keep steady, where will anyone see the next move in it? One will say "Throw!", another "Don't throw!", another "Don't toss it up!" That's a brawl, not a game.

2.5.18 So Socrates knew how to play ball. How? He knew how to play in the courtroom. "Tell me, Anytus," he says, "how can you say I don't believe in a god? What do you think divine spirits are? Aren't they either children of gods, or some mixture of men and gods?"

2.5.19 And when he agreed: "Then who do you think could believe that mules exist but not donkeys?" —as though he were playing with a ball. And what was the ball in play there at the time? Imprisonment, exile, drinking poison, losing his wife, leaving his children orphans.

2.5.20 These were the things in play, and he played with them; but he played none the less, and handled the ball with perfect timing. So we too should have all the care of the finest ball-player, but the indifference of someone playing for a mere ball.

2.5.21 For in any case one has to exercise skill on some external material—not taking it up for its own sake, but, whatever it is, displaying one's skill in handling it. So too the weaver doesn't make the wool, but works skillfully on whatever wool he's given.

2.5.22 Someone else gives you food and property, and can take these very things away, and the body itself too. You, then, take the material and work it. Then, if you come through unharmed,

2.5.23 others who meet you will congratulate you on being saved; but the one who knows how to look at such things, if he sees you conducted yourself decently in it, will praise you and share your pleasure, and if he sees you were saved through some disgraceful conduct, the opposite. For where rejoicing is reasonable, so is rejoicing with someone.

2.5.24 How, then, are some external things said to be according to nature and others contrary to nature? As if we were detached

from everything. For I'll say it's natural for the foot to be clean; but if you take it as a foot and not as something detached, it will be fitting for it to step into mud and tread on thorns, and sometimes to be cut off for the sake of the whole body; otherwise it will no longer be a foot. We should think something like this about ourselves too.

2.5.25 What are you? A human being. If you look at yourself as something detached, it's natural to live to old age, to be rich, to be healthy. But if you look at yourself as a human being and part of some whole, then for the sake of that whole it's fitting for you now to be sick, now to go on a voyage and run risks, now to be in want, and sometimes to die before your time.

2.5.26 So why are you upset? Don't you know that just as that foot would no longer be a foot, so you would no longer be a human being? For what is a human being? Part of a city—first of the one made up of gods and men, and then of the one said to be closest to it, which is a small copy of the whole.

2.5.27 "So I'm to be put on trial now?" So is someone else to have a fever now, someone else go to sea, someone else die, someone else be condemned? For in a body like this, in this world that surrounds us, among these companions of our life, it's impossible that such things shouldn't befall different people in different ways.

2.5.28 So your job is to come and say what you should, and to handle these things as is fitting.

2.5.29 Then the judge says, "I judge you guilty." "Good luck to you. I've done my part; whether you've done yours, you'll see for yourself." For he runs some risk too—don't forget that.

## CHAPTER 6: ON INDIFFERENCE

*Things are indifferent but their use is not; a human being is part of a whole, like ripening grain.*

2.6.1 The conditional proposition is indifferent; the judgment about it is not indifferent, but is either knowledge or opinion or error. So too, life is indifferent; the use of it is not indifferent.

2.6.2 So when someone tells you that these things too are indifferent, never become careless; and when someone urges you to be careful, never become abject and dazzled by materials.

2.6.3 It's good, too, to know your own preparation and ability, so that where you haven't prepared you keep quiet and aren't upset if others have the advantage of you there.

2.6.4 For you, too, will expect to have the advantage in syllogisms, and if they're upset at that, you'll console them: "I learned them, and you didn't."

2.6.5 So too, where some experience is needed, don't look for the advantage that comes from it, but give way on that to those who have the experience, and be content with being steady.

2.6.6 "Go and pay your respects to so-and-so." "I do." "How?" "Not abjectly." "But you were shut out." "Yes, because I haven't learned to get in through the window. When I find the door shut, I have to either go away or go in through the window."

2.6.7 "But talk to him, too." "I do."

2.6.8 "In what way?" "Not abjectly." "But you didn't get what you wanted." Well, was that your job? It was his. So why lay claim to what belongs to someone else? If you always remember what is yours and what belongs to someone else, [and] you won't be disturbed.

2.6.9 That's why Chrysippus puts it well: "As long as what comes next is unclear to me, I always hold to what is better suited for obtaining the things in accordance with nature; for God himself made me disposed to select them.

2.6.10 But if I knew that I was fated to be sick now, I'd even have an impulse toward it; for the foot too, if it had a mind, would have an impulse to get muddy."

2.6.11 Because what are ears of grain produced for? Isn't it so that they may also ripen and dry? And they do ripen—but isn't it so that they may also be harvested?

2.6.12 For they don't come into being as detached things. So if they had feelings, should they pray never to be harvested? But never to be harvested is a curse for ears of grain.

2.6.13 So too, you should know that for human beings not dying is a curse: it's like never ripening, never being harvested.

2.6.14 But since we are at once the ones who must be harvested and also aware that we are being harvested, that's why we're upset. For we neither know what we are, nor have we studied what belongs to human beings as horsemen study what belongs to horses.

2.6.15 Now Chrysantas, when he was about to strike an enemy, heard the trumpet sounding the recall and held back; so much more important did it seem to him to carry out the general's order than to do what he himself wanted.[6]

2.6.16 But none of us is willing, even when necessity calls, to obey it readily; instead, weeping and groaning, we suffer what we suffer and call it "circumstances."

2.6.17 What circumstances, man? If by circumstances you mean what stands around you, everything is circumstances; but if you mean hardships, what hardship is there in what has come into being perishing?

2.6.18 And what destroys it is a sword, or a wheel, or the sea, or a roof tile, or a tyrant. What does it matter to you by which road you go down to Hades?

2.6.19 They're all equal. And if you want to hear the truth, the shorter one is the one the tyrant sends you by. No tyrant ever took six months to cut a man's throat, but a fever often takes a year. All these things are noise and the bluster of empty names.

2.6.20 "My head is in danger before Caesar." And isn't mine in danger, living in Nicopolis, where there are so many earthquakes? And you yourself, when you cross the Adriatic, what's in danger? Isn't it your head?

2.6.21 "But my opinion is in danger too." Your own? How? Who can compel you to hold an opinion you don't want to? Someone else's? And what danger is it to you if others hold false opinions?

2.6.22 "But I'm in danger of being exiled." What is being exiled? Being somewhere other than Rome? "Yes. And what if I'm sent to Gyara?" If it suits you, you'll go; if not, you have somewhere to

6 Chrysantas is a Persian officer in Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*.

go instead of Gyara—where the man sending you to Gyara will go too, whether he likes it or not.

2.6.23 Why, then, do you go up to it as if to something great? It's smaller than your preparation—so that a talented young man may say, "It wasn't worth it to have heard so much, written so much, and sat so long at the feet of an old man not worth much."

2.6.24 Just remember that division by which what is yours is marked off from what is not yours. Never lay claim to anything that belongs to others.

2.6.25 The tribunal and the prison are each a place, the one high, the other low; but your choice, if you want to keep it the same in each, can be kept the same.

2.6.26 And we'll be emulators of Socrates when we can write hymns of praise in prison.

2.6.27 But as we are now, consider whether we'd put up with it in prison if someone said to us, "Would you like me to read you some hymns?" "Why are you bothering me? Don't you know the troubles I'm in? For I'm in the middle of—" The middle of what? "I'm about to die." And will other people be immortal?

## CHAPTER 7: HOW TO CONSULT DIVINERS

*Consult diviners without desire or aversion, since what is good or bad is known only from within.*

2.7.1 Because we consult diviners at the wrong time, many of us neglect many duties.

2.7.2 For what can the diviner see beyond death, or danger, or disease, or things of that kind generally?

2.7.3 So if I have to run a risk for a friend, and if it's even my duty to die for him, where's the occasion for consulting a diviner any more? Don't I have the diviner within, who has told me the essence of good and bad, who has explained the signs of both?

2.7.4 So what further need do I have of entrails or birds? And am I to put up with him when he says, "It's in your interest"? Does he know what's in anyone's interest?

2.7.5 Does he know what is good? Has he learned the signs of goods and bad things, as he has the signs in entrails? For if he knows the signs of these, he knows those of the fine and the shameful, the just and the unjust, too.

2.7.6 Man, you tell me what's signified—life or death, poverty or wealth; but whether these things are beneficial or harmful, am I going to ask you?

2.7.7 Why don't you give your opinion on questions of grammar? And yet here, where all of us human beings go astray and fight with one another, you do?

2.7.8 That's why the woman spoke well who wanted to send Gratilla, in exile, her shipload of monthly provisions; when someone said, "Domitian will confiscate them," she said, "I'd rather he took them than that I didn't send them."[7]

2.7.9 What is it, then, that makes us consult diviners so constantly? Cowardice—fear of outcomes. That's why we flatter the diviners: "Sir, will I inherit from my father?" "Let's see; let's make a sacrifice about it." "Yes, sir, as fortune wills." Then if he says, "You'll inherit," we thank him as if we'd received the inheritance from him. That's why they go on making fools of us.

2.7.10 What then? We should go without desire or aversion, the way a traveler asks someone he meets which of two roads leads where he's going, with no desire for the right-hand one to lead there rather than the left; for he doesn't want to go down either one in particular, but whichever leads there.

2.7.11 That's how we should come to God as a guide—the way we use our eyes, not begging them to show us these things rather than those, but accepting the impressions of whatever they show us.

2.7.12 As it is, we clutch the augur's bird trembling, and calling on God we beg him:

2.7.13 "Lord, have mercy; let me come out of this." Slave! Do you want anything other than what is best? And is anything better than what seems good to God?

7 Gratilla, a Roman noblewoman, was exiled by the emperor Domitian around AD 93.

2.7.14 Why, as far as it lies with you, do you corrupt the judge and lead the counselor astray?

## CHAPTER 8: WHAT THE ESSENCE OF THE GOOD IS

*The good lies where God's essence lies, in reason; we carry a fragment of God within us.*

2.8.1 God is beneficial; but the good is beneficial too. It's reasonable, then, that where the essence of God is, there too is the essence of the good.

2.8.2 What, then, is the essence of God? Flesh? Heaven forbid. Land? Heaven forbid. Reputation? Heaven forbid. Mind, knowledge, right reason.

2.8.3 There, then, and nowhere else, look for the essence of the good. For do you look for it in a plant? No. In an irrational animal? No. So if you look for it in a rational being, why look anywhere but in what distinguishes it from irrational things?

2.8.4 Plants aren't even capable of using impressions; that's why you don't speak of the good in their case. The good, then, requires the use of impressions.

2.8.5 Only that? For if only that, then say that goods, and happiness and unhappiness, exist in the other animals too.

2.8.6 But you don't say so, and you're right; for even if they have the use of impressions in the fullest measure, they certainly don't have awareness of their use of impressions. And with good reason: they were born to serve others, not to be of primary account themselves.

2.8.7 Take the donkey: was it born to be of primary account? No; but because we needed a back able to carry something. But, by Zeus, we also needed it to walk; that's why it acquired the use of impressions as well, since otherwise it couldn't walk.

2.8.8 And there, more or less, it stops. But if it had somehow also acquired awareness of its use of impressions, then clearly, by reason, it would no longer be subject to us or render us these services, but would be our equal and like us.

2.8.9 Won't you, then, look for the essence of the good there, where, if it's absent, you refuse to speak of the good in any other thing?

2.8.10 "What then? Aren't those creatures works of the gods too?" They are, but not of primary account, nor parts of the gods.

2.8.11 But you are of primary account; you are a fragment of God; you have within yourself a part of him. Why, then, are you ignorant of your kinship? Why don't you know where you have come from?

2.8.12 Won't you remember, when you eat, who you are that eat, and whom you are nourishing? When you have sex, who you are that do it? When you keep company, when you exercise, when you converse, don't you know that you are nourishing God, exercising God? You carry God around with you, you wretch, and you don't know it.

2.8.13 Do you think I mean some god of silver or gold, outside you? You carry him within yourself, and you don't notice that you're defiling him with impure thoughts and filthy actions.

2.8.14 And if a statue of God were present, you wouldn't dare do any of the things you do. But when God himself is present within you, seeing and hearing everything, aren't you ashamed to think and do such things, you who are blind to your own nature and under God's wrath?

2.8.15 Why, then, when we send a young man out from school to some line of action, are we afraid that he'll do something badly, eat badly, have sex badly, that rags will humble him or fine clothes puff him up?

2.8.16 This one doesn't know his own god; this one doesn't know with whom he is setting out. And are we to put up with him saying, "I wish I had you with me"?

2.8.17 Don't you have God there? And having him, do you look for someone else?

2.8.18 Will he tell you anything other than this? Why, if you were a statue by Phidias, his Athena or his Zeus, you'd remember both yourself and the craftsman, and if you had any sense at all,

you would try [would] to do nothing unworthy of the one who made you or of yourself, and not to appear in an unbecoming posture to those looking at you;

2.8.19 but as it is, because Zeus made you, you don't care what sort of person you show yourself to be? And how is the one craftsman like the other, or the one work like the other?

2.8.20 What work of a craftsman has straightaway within itself the powers that its construction displays? Isn't it stone, or bronze, or gold, or ivory? And Phidias's Athena, once she has stretched out her hand and received the Victory on it, stands like that for all eternity; but the works of God move, breathe, use impressions, test them.

2.8.21 Being the work of this craftsman, do you disgrace it? What's more, he not only made you, but entrusted you to yourself alone and placed you in your own keeping—

2.8.22 and won't you remember even that, but disgrace the trust as well? If God had entrusted some orphan to you, would you neglect him like this?

2.8.23 He has handed you over to yourself and says, "I had no one more trustworthy than you. Keep this person for me as he is by nature: self-respecting, trustworthy, high-minded, undaunted, free from passion, undisturbed." And then you don't keep him?

2.8.24 "But people will say, 'Where did this fellow get that lofty brow and solemn face?'" Not yet as it deserves. "For I don't yet have confidence in what I've learned and assented to; I'm still afraid of my own weakness.

2.8.25 Just let me gain confidence, and then you'll see the look one should have and the bearing one should have; then I'll show you the statue, when it's finished, when it's polished.

2.8.26 What do you think? A lofty brow? Heaven forbid. Did the Zeus at Olympia put on a lofty brow? No, his gaze is fixed, as befits one about to say, 'No word of mine can be taken back or prove false.'[8]

8 The quotation is Zeus's promise to Thetis in Homer's *Iliad* (1.526).

2.8.27 That's how I'll show myself to you: trustworthy, self-respecting, noble, undisturbed—

2.8.28 What, then? Someone immortal and ageless, perhaps? Someone who never falls ill? No: someone who dies like a god, who is ill like a god. This I have, this I can do; the rest I neither have nor can do.

2.8.29 I'll show you the sinews of a philosopher. What sinews? Desire that never fails to get what it wants, aversion that never falls into what it would avoid, impulse as it ought to be, purpose that is careful, assent that is never rash. That's what you'll see."

## CHAPTER 9: THAT, UNABLE TO FULFILL THE PROMISE OF A HUMAN BEING, WE TAKE ON THAT OF A PHILOSOPHER

*Actions preserve or destroy what we are; reciting doctrine without practice is like a pretended conversion.*

2.9.1 Simply fulfilling the promise of a human being is no ordinary thing.

2.9.2 For what is a human being? —"A rational, mortal animal," someone says. —Then, straight away, what does being rational set us apart from? —From wild beasts. —And from what else?

2.9.3 —From sheep and the like. —Then take care you never do anything the way a wild beast does. Otherwise you've destroyed the human being; you haven't fulfilled the promise. Take care you never do anything the way a sheep does. Otherwise, that way too, the human being is destroyed.

2.9.4 So what do we do like sheep? When we act for the sake of our belly, for the sake of our genitals, at random, in a filthy way, without paying attention, where have we sunk to? To the level of sheep.

2.9.5 What have we destroyed? Our rationality. When we act combatively, harmfully, angrily, aggressively, where have we sunk to?

2.9.6 To the level of wild beasts. So then, some of us are big wild beasts, and others small, spiteful little beasts, the kind that make you say, "Let it be a lion that eats me, at least!"

2.9.7 And through all of these the promise of a human being is destroyed.

2.9.8 For when is a conjunction preserved? When it fulfills its promise; so a conjunction is preserved when it is made up of true parts. When is a disjunction? When it fulfills its promise. When are pipes, a lyre, a horse, a dog?

2.9.9 So what's surprising if a human being too is preserved in the same way, and destroyed in the same way?

2.9.10 Each thing is strengthened and preserved by the actions that correspond to it: the carpenter by carpentry, the grammarian by grammar. But if he gets into the habit of writing ungrammatically, his art is bound to be corrupted and destroyed.

2.9.11 In the same way, self-respecting actions preserve the self-respecting person and shameless ones destroy him; trustworthy actions preserve the trustworthy person, and their opposites destroy him.

2.9.12 And conversely, the opposite actions strengthen the opposite kinds of people: shamelessness the shameless, untrustworthiness the untrustworthy, abuse the abusive, anger the angry, and taking and giving out of all proportion the lover of money.

2.9.13 That's why philosophers advise us not to be content with learning alone, but to add practice, and then training.

2.9.14 For over a long time we've grown used to doing the opposite, and it's the opinions opposed to the right ones that we have ready to hand. So unless we make the right ones ready to hand as well, we'll be nothing but interpreters of other people's judgments.

2.9.15 Right now, which of us can't give a technical lecture on good and bad? That of the things that exist, some are good, some bad, and some indifferent; good are the excellences and what shares in them; bad, the opposite; indifferent, wealth, health, reputation.

2.9.16 Then, if in the middle of our talking there's a louder noise than usual, or one of those present laughs at us, we're thrown into a panic.

2.9.17 Where are those things you were saying, philosopher? Where were you bringing them out from when you said them? From your lips, just from there. So why do you defile help that belongs to others? Why do you gamble with the most important things?

2.9.18 For it's one thing to store bread and wine in a pantry, and another to eat them. What's eaten is digested, distributed, and becomes sinews, flesh, bones, blood, a good complexion, easy breathing. What's stored away you can take out and show whenever you like, readily enough, but it does you no good, except so far as it makes you seem to have it. For what difference does it make whether you expound these doctrines or those of people who think differently?

2.9.19 Sit down now and give a technical lecture on the doctrines of Epicurus, and maybe you'll do it more usefully than Epicurus himself. So why do you call yourself a Stoic? Why do you deceive the multitude? Why do you play the part of a Jew when you're a Greek?

2.9.20 Don't you see how each person comes to be called a Jew, a Syrian, an Egyptian? And when we see someone hedging between the two, we usually say, "He isn't a Jew, he's just playing the part." But when he takes on the state of mind of someone who has been immersed and has made his choice, then he really is a Jew, and is called one.[9]

2.9.21 So we too are counterfeit converts, immersed in name only: Jews in word, something else in deed, with no real feeling for the reasoning we profess, far from putting into practice the things we say—the very things we pride ourselves on, as if we knew them.

2.9.22 So it is that we, who can't even fulfill the promise of a human being, take on that of a philosopher as well—a burden as

9 Epictetus alludes to the ritual immersion that marked a convert's entry into Judaism.

heavy as if someone who couldn't lift ten pounds wanted to hoist the stone of Ajax.[10]

## CHAPTER 10: HOW TO DISCOVER OUR DUTIES FROM OUR NAMES

*Each role, as human being, citizen, son, brother or councilor, marks out the duties that go with it.*

2.10.1 Consider who you are. First of all, a human being: that is, someone who has nothing more authoritative than choice, with everything else subordinate to it, while choice itself is not enslaved or subject to anything.

2.10.2 So consider what reason sets you apart from. You're set apart from wild beasts, you're set apart from sheep.

2.10.3 Beyond that, you're a citizen of the world and a part of it—not one of the parts that serve, but one of those that lead; for you can understand the divine government of things and reason out what follows from it.

2.10.4 What, then, is the promise of a citizen? To treat nothing as a private advantage, to deliberate about nothing as though cut off from the whole, but to be like the hand or the foot: if they had reason and understood their natural constitution, they would never exert impulse or desire in any way except by referring it to the whole.

2.10.5 That's why the philosophers are right to say that if the good and noble man knew in advance what was going to happen, he would even cooperate with being ill, dying and being maimed, because he would see that this is allotted him by the ordering of the universe, and that the whole is more important than the part, and the city than the citizen.

2.10.6 But as it is, since we don't know in advance, it's our duty to hold on to whatever is naturally more fit to be chosen, since we were born for this too.

2.10.7 Next, remember that you are a son. What is the promise of this role? To regard everything that is his as his father's, to

10 In the *Iliad* (7.268–270) Ajax hurls a huge millstone at Hector.

obey him in everything, never to criticize him to anyone or say or do anything to harm him, to give way to him in everything and yield, helping him as far as he can. After this, know that you are also a brother.

2.10.8 To this role too you owe deference, obedience, kind words, never contesting with him any of the things outside your choice, but gladly giving them up, so that you may have the larger share in the things within your choice.

2.10.9 For see what it means to gain his goodwill in exchange for a lettuce, if it comes to that, or a seat—what an advantage that is!

2.10.10 After that, if you're a member of some city's council, remember that you're a councilor; if young, that you're young; if old, that you're old; if a father, that you're a father.

2.10.11 For each of these names, when you stop to reflect on it, always sketches out the actions that belong to it.

2.10.12 But if you go off and run down your brother, I tell you, "You've forgotten who you are and what your name is."

2.10.13 Then, if you were a smith and used your hammer the wrong way, you'd have forgotten the smith; but if you've forgotten the brother, and become an enemy instead of a brother, will it seem to you that you've traded nothing for nothing?

2.10.14 And if instead of a human being, a gentle and social creature, you've become a wild beast—harmful, treacherous, biting—have you lost nothing? Must you lose some cash to be harmed? Does the loss of nothing else harm a human being?

2.10.15 Then if you lost your grammar or your music, you'd count its loss as damage; but if you lose your self-respect, your restraint and your gentleness, you think the matter is nothing?

2.10.16 And yet those things are lost through some external cause outside our choice, but these through our own doing; and those it's neither fine to have nor shameful to lose, but with these, not having them and losing them is shameful, disgraceful and a misfortune. What does the man lose who takes the passive role in sex with men?

2.10.17 His manhood. And the one who does it to him? Many other things, and he too loses his manhood no less. What does the adulterer lose?

2.10.18 The self-respecting man, the self-controlled man, the decent man, the citizen, the neighbor. What does the angry man lose? Something else. The frightened man?

2.10.19 Something else. No one is bad without loss and damage. So then, if you look for damage in terms of cash, all of these are unharmed, have lost nothing, and even, as it may happen, gain and profit, whenever some cash comes their way through one of these deeds.

2.10.20 But see: if you reduce everything to a bit of cash, not even the man who loses his nose will have been harmed. —"Yes, he will," he says, "because his body has been mutilated."

2.10.21 —Come now: and the man who has lost his very sense of smell, does he lose nothing? Is there no power of the soul, then, that benefits the one who acquires it and damages the one who loses it?

2.10.22 —What sort do you mean? —Don't we have a natural sense of self-respect? —We do. —Isn't the man who loses it damaged? Isn't he deprived of something, doesn't he lose something that belongs to him?

2.10.23 Don't we have a natural trustworthiness, a natural affection, a natural wish to help, a natural tolerance of one another? So is the man who lets himself be damaged in these respects to be unharmed and without loss?

2.10.24 What, then? Am I not to harm the one who harmed me? —First look at what harm is, and remember what you've heard from the philosophers.

2.10.25 For if the good lies in choice, and the bad likewise in choice, see whether what you're saying doesn't come to this: "What, then?

2.10.26 Since he harmed himself by doing me some wrong, am I not to harm myself by doing him some wrong?"

2.10.27 So why don't we picture it like that? Why do we think that where there's some damage to the body or to property, there's harm, but where it's to our choice, there's no harm at all?

2.10.28 For the man who has been deceived, or who has done wrong, doesn't get a headache, or a pain in his eye or his hip; he doesn't lose his field.

2.10.29 And these are the only things we care about. But whether our choice will be self-respecting and trustworthy or shameless and untrustworthy, that doesn't bother us in the slightest—except in the school, and only as far as our little arguments go.

2.10.30 And so we make progress as far as our little arguments go, but outside them not the slightest bit.

## CHAPTER 11: WHAT THE BEGINNING OF PHILOSOPHY IS

*Philosophy begins with seeing that people apply shared preconceptions differently, and looks for a standard to test them.*

2.11.1 The beginning of philosophy, at least for those who take it up as they should and come in by the front door, is an awareness of your own weakness and incapacity in the things that matter most.

2.11.2 For we don't come into the world with any natural concept of a right-angled triangle or a quarter-tone; we're taught each of them through some technical instruction, and that's why those who don't know them don't think they know them, either.

2.11.3 But who has come into the world without an innate concept of good and bad, fine and shameful, fitting and unfitting, happiness, what is proper and what falls to us, what we ought to do and what we ought not to do?

2.11.4 That's why we all use these words and try to apply our preconceptions to particular cases.

2.11.5 "He did well"; "as he should"; "not as he should"; "he was unlucky"; "he was lucky"; "he's unjust"; "he's just." Which of us holds back from these words? Which of us puts off using them until he's learned, the way people who don't know do with terms about lines or sounds?

2.11.6 The reason is that in this area we come already taught to some extent by nature, as it were, and starting from this we've added conceit as well.

2.11.7 —"Why," he says, "don't I know what's fine and what's shameful? Don't I have a concept of it?" —You do. —"Don't I apply it to particular cases?" —You do. —"Then don't I apply it well?"

2.11.8 —That's where the whole question lies, and that's where conceit comes in. For starting from these agreed points, people advance to what's disputed by applying them inappropriately.

2.11.9 Since if they had acquired this too, on top of the rest, what would stop them from being perfect?

2.11.10 But now, since you think you also apply your preconceptions to particular cases appropriately, tell me, where do you get that from? —"It seems so to me." —But it doesn't seem so to someone else, and he too thinks he applies them well. Or doesn't he?

2.11.11 —He does. —So can the two of you apply your preconceptions appropriately in matters where you hold conflicting opinions?

2.11.12 —We can't. —Then can you show us anything higher than your own opinion that would help us apply them better? And does the madman do anything other than what seems good to him? So is this criterion enough for him too? —It isn't. —Then we must come to something higher than seeming. What is it?

2.11.13 Look, here's the beginning of philosophy: an awareness of how people conflict with one another, a search for what causes the conflict, a rejection and distrust of mere opinion, an inquiry into whether an opinion is correct, and the discovery of a standard, just as we discovered the scale for weights, and the carpenter's rule for straight and crooked.

2.11.14 —Is this the beginning of philosophy? Is everything that seems so to everyone right? —And how can things that conflict be right? —Then not all of them, but the ones that seem so to us.

2.11.15 Why those rather than what seems so to the Syrians, why rather than to the Egyptians, why rather than what appears so to me or to so-and-so? —No reason. —So what seems so to each per-

son isn't enough to make it so. For even with weights and measures we aren't content with how things merely look; we've discovered a standard for each.

2.11.16 So here is there no standard higher than seeming? And how can the most necessary things in human life be beyond evidence and discovery? —Then there is one.

2.11.17 —Then why don't we look for it and find it, and having found it, use it from then on without deviating, without stretching out so much as a finger without it?

2.11.18 For this, I think, is what, once found, cures of their madness those who use mere seeming as the measure of everything; so that from then on, starting from things that are known and clearly distinguished, we can use our preconceptions, properly articulated, in particular cases.

2.11.19 What's the subject under examination? —Pleasure.

2.11.20 —Bring it to the standard, throw it on the scale. Must the good be the kind of thing it's right to be confident in and to trust? —It must. —Then is it right to be confident in something unstable?

2.11.21 —No. —Is pleasure something stable, then? —No. —Then pick it up, throw it off the scale, and drive it far out of the territory of good things.

2.11.22 But if you're not sharp-sighted and one scale isn't enough for you, bring another. Is it right to be elated at the good? —Yes. —Then is it right to be elated at a pleasure when it's present? Careful you don't say it is; otherwise I won't think you even worthy of the scale.

2.11.23 That's how things are judged and weighed, once the standards are ready;

2.11.24 and this is what doing philosophy is: examining and establishing the standards;

2.11.25 while actually using what you've come to know—that is the work of the good and noble man.

## CHAPTER 12: ON CONVERSATION

*Socrates could lead anyone to see his own contradictions without anger, but the practice is risky now in Rome.*

2.12.1 What you have to learn in order to know how to use reason in argument has been worked out precisely by our school. But when it comes to using these things properly, we're completely untrained.

2.12.2 At any rate, give any one of us you like a layman to talk with, and he can't find a way to deal with him. He stirs the fellow up a little, and if the man answers at cross-purposes, he can't handle him any more; from then on he either abuses him or laughs at him and says, "He's a layman; there's no dealing with him."

2.12.3 But a guide, when he comes across someone who's lost, leads him to the right road; he doesn't laugh at him or abuse him and walk off.

2.12.4 You too: show him the truth, and you'll see that he follows. But as long as you don't show it to him, don't laugh at him; rather, recognize your own incapacity.

2.12.5 So how did Socrates do it? He compelled the man he was talking with to be his witness, and needed no other witness. That's why he could say, "I don't care about the others; I'm always satisfied with my opponent as my witness. And I don't put the question to the vote of the others, only of the man I'm talking with."

2.12.6 For he set out so clearly what followed from people's concepts that anyone at all would recognize the contradiction and back away from it.

2.12.7 "Does the envious man rejoice?" —"Not at all; he's distressed, rather." He moved his partner by proposing the opposite. "Well, then: do you think envy is distress at bad things? And how could there be envy of bad things?"

2.12.8 So he made the man say that envy is distress at good things. "Well, then: could anyone envy things that are nothing to him?"

2.12.9 —"Not at all." And so, having filled out and articulated the concept, he'd leave, without saying, "Define envy for me," and then, when the man had defined it, "Your definition's bad, for the definition isn't coextensive with the thing defined" —

2.12.10 technical terms, and so tiresome and hard for laymen to follow, and yet we can't do without them.

2.12.11 But the things by which the layman himself, following his own impressions, might concede a point or reject it—those are exactly what we're quite unable to move him with.

2.12.12 And so, naturally enough, those of us with any caution at all, aware of this incapacity of ours, keep away from the business.

2.12.13 But most people, the rash ones, once they've got themselves into something like this, make a muddle and are muddled, and in the end they go off having abused and been abused.

2.12.14 The first and most characteristic thing about Socrates was that he never lost his temper in argument, never came out with anything abusive, never anything insolent, but put up with those who abused him and put an end to quarrels.

2.12.15 If you want to know how great his power was in this, read Xenophon's *Symposium*, and you'll see how many quarrels he settled.

2.12.16 That's why, reasonably enough, among the poets too, the highest praise goes to the line: "Swiftly and skillfully he put an end even to a great quarrel."

2.12.17 What then? Nowadays the business isn't very safe, especially in Rome. For the man who does it obviously won't be able to do it in a corner; he'll have to go up to some ex-consul, perhaps, a rich man, and ask him:

2.12.18 "Can you tell me, you there, who you've entrusted your horses to?" "I can." "To just anyone, someone who knows nothing about horses?" "Not at all." "Well, then: who have you entrus-

ted your gold or your silver or your clothes to?" "Not to just anyone either."

2.12.19 "And your own body—have you ever considered entrusting it to someone to look after it?" "Of course." "To an expert, obviously, in training or medicine?" "Certainly."

2.12.20 "Are these the most important things you have, or have you acquired something else better than all of them?" "What do you mean?" "The thing, by Zeus, that uses these very things, and tests each of them, and deliberates."

2.12.21 "Do you mean the soul?" "You've understood correctly; that's exactly what I mean." "By Zeus, I think this is by far the best thing I have."

2.12.22 "Then can you tell me how you've taken care of your soul? For it's not likely that a man as wise as you and as respected in the city would carelessly and at random let the best thing he has be neglected and go to ruin."

2.12.23 "Not at all." "But have you taken care of it yourself? Did you learn how from someone, or work it out yourself?" From here on comes the danger: first, that he may say,

2.12.24 "What business is it of yours, my good man? Are you my master?" And then, if you keep on bothering him, he may haul off and punch you.

2.12.25 I was once an enthusiast for this practice myself, before I ran into all this.

## CHAPTER 13: ON ANXIETY

*Anxiety comes from wanting what is not up to us; Zeno felt none before King Antigonus.*

2.13.1 When I see someone anxious, I say: what on earth does this man want? If he didn't want something that isn't up to him, how could he still be anxious?

2.13.2 That's why the lyre-player isn't anxious when he sings on his own, but he is when he walks into the theater, even if he has a fine voice and plays beautifully. For he wants not only to sing well but also to win applause, and that's no longer up to him.

2.13.3 So where he has knowledge, there he's confident: bring any layman you like, and he pays no attention. But where he doesn't know and hasn't practiced, there he's anxious.

2.13.4 What is it about? He doesn't know what a crowd is, or what a crowd's praise is. He's learned to strike the top string and the bottom one, but what praise from the many is and what power it has in life, he neither knows nor has practiced.

2.13.5 So he's bound to tremble and turn pale. Now, when I see someone afraid, I can't say he isn't a lyre-player; but I can say something else—and not just one thing, but many.

2.13.6 And first of all I call him a foreigner and say: this man doesn't know where on earth he is; though he's lived here so long, he doesn't know the city's laws and customs, what's permitted and what isn't. He's never even called in a lawyer to tell him and explain what the law is.

2.13.7 He doesn't write a will without knowing how it should be written or calling in someone who knows, nor does he otherwise seal a bond or draw up a guarantee; but he uses desire and aversion, impulse, intention and purpose without a lawyer.

2.13.8 How without a lawyer? He doesn't know that he wants what isn't granted and doesn't want what is inevitable, and he doesn't know either what is his own or what belongs to others. If he did know, he'd never be hindered, never be frustrated; he wouldn't be anxious.

2.13.9 Of course not. Does anyone fear things that aren't bad, then? —No. —Well, then: things that are bad, but that it's up to him to prevent from happening?

2.13.10 —Not at all. —So if the things outside our choice are neither good nor bad, and everything within our choice is up to us, and no one can take those things from us or force on us any of them that we don't want, where's the room for anxiety any more?

2.13.11 But we're anxious about our poor body, our bit of property, what Caesar will think—and about what's within, not at all. Are we anxious about not forming a false opinion? —No; that's

up to me. —About exercising an impulse contrary to nature? —Not about that either. —

2.13.12 So when you see someone turning pale, just as the doctor says from his complexion, "This man's spleen is affected, that one's liver," so you too should say, "This man's desire and aversion are affected; they aren't going smoothly, they're inflamed."

2.13.13 For nothing else changes a man's color, or makes him tremble or his teeth chatter, or makes him shift from knee to knee and crouch on his feet.

2.13.14 That's why Zeno wasn't anxious when he was about to meet Antigonus: for Antigonus had no power over any of the things Zeno admired, and Zeno paid no attention to the things Antigonus did have power over.[11]

2.13.15 But Antigonus was anxious when he was about to meet Zeno, and with good reason: he wanted to please him, and that lay outside himself. Zeno didn't want to please Antigonus, any more than any other expert wants to please someone with no skill.

2.13.16 Do I want to please you? What for? Do you know the standards by which one human being is judged by another? Have you taken the trouble to learn what a good man is and what a bad man is, and how each comes to be so? Then why aren't you good yourself?

2.13.17 —"How am I not?" he says. —Because no good man grieves or groans, no one wails, no one turns pale and trembles or says, "How will he receive me? How will he listen to me?"

2.13.18 Slave! However he sees fit. So why do you care about what belongs to others? Now, isn't it his fault if he receives what comes from you badly? —Of course. —And can the fault be one person's and the harm another's? —No. —Then why are you anxious about what belongs to others?

2.13.19 —Yes, but I'm anxious about how I'll talk to him. —What, can't you talk to him however you like? —But I'm afraid I'll be thrown off.

11 Antigonus Gonatas, king of Macedon in the third century BC, admired Zeno and invited him to his court.

2.13.20 —When you're about to write the name "Dion," you're not afraid you'll be thrown off, are you? —Not at all. —What's the reason? Isn't it that you've practiced writing? —Of course. —Well, then: if you were about to read, wouldn't you be in the same state? —The same. —What's the reason? That every art has something strong and confident about it within its own sphere.

2.13.21 So haven't you practiced talking? And what else were you practicing in the school? —Syllogisms and shifting arguments. —What for? Wasn't it so as to converse skillfully? And doesn't "skillfully" mean at the right moment, safely and intelligently, and besides that without stumbling and without being tripped up, and on top of all that, confidently? —Yes.

2.13.22 —So when you're a horseman and you've ridden out onto the plain against a foot soldier, you're anxious—where you're trained and he's untrained? —Yes, but he has the power to kill me.

2.13.23 —Then tell the truth, you poor wretch; stop bragging, don't claim to be a philosopher, don't ignore who your masters are. But as long as your body gives them this handle to grab you by, follow anyone who's stronger than you.

2.13.24 Socrates had practiced speaking—the man who talked the way he did to the tyrants, to the jurors, in prison. Diogenes had practiced speaking—the man who spoke the way he did to Alexander, to Philip, to the pirates, to the man who bought him

2.13.25 to those who have made it their concern, the confident ones. But you, go about your own business and never leave it: go off into your corner, sit down, weave syllogisms and put them to someone else:

2.13.27 there's no man in you to lead a city.

## CHAPTER 14: TO NASO

*Philosophy is tedious to watch while it is learned; most people at life's festival care only for fodder.*

2.14.1 When one of the Romans came in with his son and listened to one of the readings, he said, "This is the method of teaching," and fell silent.[12]

2.14.2 When the man asked him to go on to what followed, he said, "Every art is tedious for the layman who has no experience of it, while it's being taught."

2.14.3 And the products of the arts show at once what they're useful for, what they were made for, and most of them also have something attractive and charming about them.

2.14.4 Take a shoemaker: being there and following how someone learns the trade is no fun, but the shoe is useful, and not unpleasant to look at, either.

2.14.5 And a carpenter's training is particularly tiresome for a layman who happens to be there, but the work displays what the art is useful for.

2.14.6 You'll see it much more with music. If you're there while someone's being taught, the lesson will seem to you the most unpleasant thing of all; yet the products of music are sweet and delightful for laymen to hear.

2.14.7 And here too, we picture the work of the one who does philosophy as something like this: that he must bring his will into harmony with what happens, so that nothing that happens happens against our will, and nothing that doesn't happen fails to happen when we want it to.

2.14.8 The result for those who have established this is that they never fail to get what they desire, never fall into what they would avoid, and live out their lives free of pain, fear and disturbance, both on their own and with their associates, maintaining their relationships, both natural and acquired: son, father,

12 The chapter's title names the visitor as Naso, a Roman otherwise unknown.

brother, citizen, husband, wife, neighbor, fellow traveler, ruler, subject.

2.14.9 That's how we picture the work of the one who does philosophy. Next, then, we ask how this is to be achieved.

2.14.10 Now, we see that the carpenter becomes a carpenter by learning certain things, and the helmsman becomes a helmsman by learning certain things. So perhaps here too it isn't enough to want to become good and noble, but one also needs to learn certain things? So we ask what these are.

2.14.11 The philosophers say that the first thing to learn is this: that there is a God, that he provides for the universe, and that it's impossible to escape his notice, not only in what you do, but even in what you intend or think. Next, what the gods are like.

2.14.12 For whatever they are found to be like, the man who means to please and obey them must try, as far as he can, to become like them:

2.14.13 if the divine is trustworthy, he too must be trustworthy; if free, he too must be free; if beneficent, he too beneficent; if magnanimous, he too magnanimous; and so, as one who emulates God, he must do and say everything that follows from that.

2.14.14 So where should we begin? —If you'll condescend to it, I'll tell you: first you have to understand the words. —So I don't understand the words now?

2.14.15 —You don't. —Then how is it that I use them? —The way illiterate people use articulate speech, the way cattle use impressions. Using is one thing, understanding another.

2.14.16 But if you think you understand them, bring any word you like, and let's test ourselves to see whether we understand it.

2.14.17 —But it's unpleasant to be cross-examined when you're already getting on in years and have, perhaps, served your three campaigns.

2.14.18 —I know that too. For you've come to me now as someone who needs nothing. And what could you even imagine you lacked? You're rich, you have children, perhaps, and a wife and plenty of slaves; Caesar knows you, you've made lots of

friends in Rome, you do your duties, you know how to do good to those who do you good and harm to those who harm you.

2.14.19 What are you missing? Well, suppose I show you that you're missing the things most necessary and most important for happiness, and that up to now you've taken care of everything except what you should have, and suppose I add the finishing touch: you don't know what God is, or what a human being is, or what is good, or what is bad—

2.14.20 and perhaps your ignorance of the rest is bearable, but that you don't know yourself—how can you put up with me, and submit to the cross-examination, and stay?

2.14.21 Not at all: you leave at once, offended. And yet what harm have I done you? None—unless the mirror harms the ugly man too, by showing him what he looks like; unless the doctor too insults the sick man [when him], when he tells him, "My friend, you think there's nothing wrong with you, but you have a fever. Don't eat today; drink water." And nobody says, "What a terrible insult!"

2.14.22 But if you tell someone, "Your desires are inflamed, your aversions are abject, your intentions are inconsistent, your impulses are out of tune with nature, your opinions are random and false," he goes straight out and says, "He insulted me."

2.14.23 Our situation is like a festival fair. The livestock and the oxen are brought there to be sold, and most people come either to buy or to sell; only a few come to look at the festival—how it's done, and why, and who is putting it on, and for what purpose.

2.14.24 So too here, in this festival of ours: some, like cattle, busy themselves with nothing beyond fodder. For all of you who concern yourselves with property and fields and slaves and one office or another—that's nothing but fodder.

2.14.25 Few are the people at the festival who love the spectacle. What is the world, then? Who governs it? No one?

2.14.26 And how can it be that a city or a household can't survive even the shortest time without someone to govern it and look after it, while so great and beautiful a structure is managed in such good order at random and by chance?

2.14.27 So there is one who governs it. What sort of being is he, and how does he govern? And what are we, who have been made by him, and for what work? Do we have some connection and relationship with him, or none?

2.14.28 That's how these few are affected, and from then on they have time for one thing only: to take a good look at the festival and then leave.

2.14.29 What happens? They're laughed at by the many—just as at the fair the sightseers are laughed at by the traders. And if the cattle had any awareness, they'd laugh at those who admired anything other than fodder.

## CHAPTER 15: TO THOSE WHO STUBBORNLY HOLD TO THEIR DECISIONS

*A decision must first be sound; holding fast to an unsound one, like a friend's starving himself, is madness.*

2.15.1 When some people hear these words—that one must be steadfast, and that choice is by nature free and unconstrained, while everything else can be hindered and compelled, is enslaved and belongs to others—they imagine that they must stick unswervingly to everything they've decided.

2.15.2 But first, what has been decided must be sound. For I want there to be vigor in the body, but the vigor of a healthy body, an athlete's body.

2.15.3 But if you show me that you have the vigor of a man raving with fever, and boast about it, I'll say to you, "My friend, look for someone to cure you. That isn't vigor, it's debility."

2.15.4 In a different way, something like this happens in the soul to those who misunderstand these words. For instance, a friend of mine once decided, for no reason at all, to starve himself to death.

2.15.5 I found out when he was already on the third day of his fast, and I went and asked him what had happened.

2.15.6 —"I've decided," he says. —All the same, what was it that persuaded you? For if your decision was right, look, here we are,

sitting beside you and helping you to depart; but if it was irrational, change your mind.

2.15.7 —"One must stick to one's decisions." —What are you doing, man? Not to all of them, only to the right ones. Otherwise, if you became convinced just now that it's night, then by all means don't change your mind: stick to it and say that one must stick to one's decisions.

2.15.8 [What are you doing, man? Not to all of them.] Don't you want to lay the starting point and the foundation first—to examine whether the decision is sound or not—and then build your firmness and your security on top of it?

2.15.9 But if you lay a rotten and crumbling foundation, you won't have a building at all; and the more and heavier the things you put on it, the faster [faster] it will come down.

2.15.10 Without any reason at all you're taking out of life, before our eyes, a man who is our friend and companion, a citizen of the same city, both the great one and the small one;

2.15.11 and then, while you're committing murder and destroying a man who has done no wrong, you say that one must stick to one's decisions.

2.15.12 And if it had somehow occurred to you to kill me, would you have had to stick to your decisions?

2.15.13 Well, that man was persuaded to change his mind, with difficulty. But some people nowadays can't be budged. So I think I now know what I didn't know before, what the common saying means: "A fool you can neither persuade nor break."

2.15.14 May I never have a wise fool for a friend! There's nothing harder to deal with. "I've decided." So do madmen; but the more firmly they decide on things that aren't real, the more hellebore they need.[13]

2.15.15 Won't you do what a sick man does and call in the doctor? "I'm ill, sir; help me. Consider what I should do; my part is to obey you."

13 Hellebore was the standard ancient remedy for madness.

2.15.16 So too here: "I don't know what I should do, and I've come to learn." No; instead it's "Talk to me about the other things. This I've decided."

2.15.17 What other things? What is greater or more urgent than for you to be persuaded that it isn't enough to have decided and not to change your mind?

2.15.18 This is a madman's vigor, not a healthy one. "I want to die, if you force me to this." Why, man? What's happened? "I've decided." Lucky for me you haven't decided to kill me!

2.15.19 "I won't take money." Why not? "I've decided." Be sure of this: with the same vigor you now use to refuse it, nothing stops you from one day tipping irrationally toward taking it, and again saying, "I've decided,"

2.15.20 just as in a sick body suffering from a flux, the flux tips now this way, now that. So too a weak soul: which way it's inclining is unclear; but when vigor is added to this inclination and this momentum, then the evil becomes beyond help and beyond cure.

## CHAPTER 16: THAT WE DO NOT PRACTICE USING OUR JUDGMENTS ABOUT GOOD AND BAD

*We know the doctrines in school but panic in practice; we must be weaned from what isn't ours.*

2.16.1 Where is the good? —In choice. —Where is the bad? —In choice. —Where is what is neither? —In the things outside our choice.

2.16.2 —What then? Does any of us remember these words outside class? Does anyone practice on his own answering the facts in this way, as he does with questions: "Is it day?" "Yes." "Well, is it night?" "No." "Well, is the number of the stars even?" "I can't say."

2.16.3 When money turns up in front of you, have you practiced giving the proper answer, "Not a good"? Have you trained yourself in these answers, or only for sophisms?

2.16.4 So why are you surprised if, where you've practiced, you outdo yourself, but where you're unpracticed, you stay the same?

2.16.5 After all, why is it that the orator, though he knows he's written well, that he's memorized what he wrote, and that he brings a pleasant voice to it, is still anxious? Because he isn't content with having practiced.

2.16.6 So what does he want? To be praised by the audience. He's trained himself to be able to declaim, but he hasn't trained himself for praise and blame.

2.16.7 For when did he ever hear from anyone what praise is, what blame is, what the nature of each is? Which kinds of praise should be pursued, which kinds of blame avoided? And when did he ever practice the practice that follows from these principles?

2.16.8 So why are you still surprised if, where he's learned, he stands out from the rest, but where he hasn't practiced, he's the same as most people?

2.16.9 It's like the lyre-player: he knows how to play, he sings well, he has a fine robe, and yet he trembles when he walks on stage. For these things he knows, but what a crowd is he doesn't know, nor what a crowd's shouting or ridicule is.

2.16.10 Why, he doesn't even know what anxiety itself is: whether it's our own doing or someone else's, whether it can be stopped or not. That's why, if he's praised, he goes off all puffed up; but if he's laughed at, that little bubble of his is pricked and collapses.

2.16.11 Something like this happens to us too. What do we admire? External things. What do we take seriously? External things. And then we're puzzled about why we're afraid, or why we're anxious?

2.16.12 What else can happen, when we think the things that befall us are bad? We can't help being afraid, we can't help being anxious.

2.16.13 Then we say, "Lord God, how can I stop being anxious?" You fool, don't you have hands? Didn't God make them for you?

Go on, sit there and pray that your nose won't run! Wipe it instead, and stop complaining.

2.16.14 What then? Has he given you nothing for this case? Hasn't he given you endurance, hasn't he given you greatness of soul, hasn't he given you courage? With hands like these, are you still looking for someone to wipe your nose?

2.16.15 But we don't practice these things or pay attention to them. Just give me one person who cares how he does something, who pays attention not to getting something but to his own activity. Who, when he's walking, pays attention to his own activity? Who, when he's deliberating, pays attention to the deliberation itself, and not to getting what he's deliberating about?

2.16.16 And if he gets it, he's elated and says, "Didn't we deliberate well? Didn't I tell you, brother, that when we've thought something through, it can't turn out any other way?" But if it goes differently, the poor wretch is crushed; he can't even find anything to say about what happened. Which of us has ever consulted a diviner about this?

2.16.17 Which of us has ever slept in a temple for guidance about his activity? Who? Give me one person, so I can see him—the man I've been looking for all this time—the truly noble and gifted one. Young or old, give him to me.[14]

2.16.18 So why are we still surprised if we're well practiced in dealing with materials, but in our activities we're abject, unseemly, worthless, cowardly, shirkers of effort, total disasters? It's because we haven't cared about it and we don't practice it.

2.16.19 If we were afraid, not of death or exile, but of fear itself, we'd practice not falling into the things that appear bad to us.

2.16.20 As it is, in the school we're fierce and glib, and if some little question about one of these things comes up, we can follow it through step by step. But drag us out into practice, and you'll find poor shipwrecked wretches. Let a disturbing impression hit

14 People slept in temples, at shrines of Asclepius for instance, hoping for guidance in their dreams.

us, and you'll find out what we were practicing and what we were training for.

2.16.21 So, through lack of practice, we keep piling things up and imagining them bigger than they really are.

2.16.22 Me, for instance: as soon as I'm at sea, I peer down into the depths or look around at the open sea and see no land, and I'm beside myself, imagining that if I'm shipwrecked I'll have to drink this whole sea; it doesn't occur to me that three pints will do for me. So what's disturbing me? The sea? No: my judgment.

2.16.23 Again, when there's an earthquake, I imagine the city is about to fall on me. Isn't a little stone enough to knock my brains out?

2.16.24 So what is it that weighs us down and puts us beside ourselves? What else but our judgments? When a man goes away and leaves his acquaintances, his companions, his places and his way of life, what weighs him down but a judgment?

2.16.25 Little children, at any rate, when they cry a bit because their nurse has gone out, forget all about it as soon as they're given a cake.

2.16.26 So do you want us to be like little children too? No, by Zeus. I don't expect a cake to have this effect on me, but correct judgments.

### THE DIVINE LAW

*Keep what is yours, give back what is taken, and dare to tell God, "Use me as you wish."*

2.16.27 And what are these? The ones a person should practice all day long, so as not to become attached to anything that isn't his own—not a companion, not a place, not the gymnasium, not even his own body—but to remember the law and keep it before his eyes. And what is the divine law?

2.16.28 To keep what is your own, not to lay claim to what belongs to others, but to use what is given you and not to long for what isn't; and when something is taken away, to give it back

willingly and at once, grateful for the time you had the use of it —if you don't want to cry for your nurse and your mama.

2.16.29 For what difference does it make what gets the better of you and what you depend on? How are you better than the man who cries over a girl, if you grieve over a little gymnasium, some little colonnades, some young fellows, and that sort of way of passing the time?

2.16.30 Another comes along complaining that he won't be drinking the water of Dirce any more. Is the Marcian water worse than Dirce's? "But I was used to that."[15]

2.16.31 And you'll get used to this one in its turn. Then, if you get attached to something like that, cry over this too, and try to write a line like the one in Euripides: "The baths of Nero and the Marcian water." See how tragedy comes about, when ordinary events befall foolish people.[16]

2.16.32 "When will I see Athens again, and the Acropolis?" You poor wretch, isn't what you see every day enough for you? Do you have anything better or greater to see than the sun, the moon, the stars, the whole earth, the sea?

2.16.33 And if you really do understand the one who governs the universe, and carry him around within you, do you still long for bits of stone and a pretty rock? So when you're about to leave the sun and the moon themselves, what will you do?

2.16.34 Sit and cry like little children? Then what were you doing in the school, what were you listening to, what were you learning? Why did you put the label "philosopher" on yourself, when you could have put the truth: "I did a few introductory courses and read some Chrysippus, but I never even got past a philosopher's front door"?

2.16.35 "For how do I have any share in the thing Socrates had a share in, who died as he did and lived as he did? The thing Diogenes had a share in?"

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15 Dirce was a famous spring at Thebes; the Aqua Marcia was one of Rome's great aqueducts.

16 A parody of Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 368, where the exiled Polynices longs for "the gymnasia where I was raised and Dirce's water."

2.16.36 Can you imagine any of them weeping or resenting it because he won't see so-and-so, or so-and-so's wife, or won't be in Athens or in Corinth, but, as it happens, in Susa or Ecbatana? [17]

2.16.37 Someone who's free to leave the party whenever he likes and stop playing, does he still fret while he stays? Doesn't he stay, as at a game, just as long as he's enjoying himself?

2.16.38 A man like that would readily put up with permanent exile, or with being condemned to death.

2.16.39 Won't you finally let yourself be weaned, as children are, and take more solid food, and stop crying for your mamas and your nurses, whimpering fit for old women?

2.16.40 "But if I go away I'll upset them." You'll upset them? Not at all. What upsets them is the same thing that upsets you: their judgment. So what can you do? Get rid of yours. As for theirs, if they're sensible they'll get rid of it themselves; if not, they'll have themselves to thank for their wailing.

2.16.41 Man, take the plunge now, as the saying goes, for the sake of a smooth flow of life, for freedom, for greatness of soul. Lift up your neck for once, like someone released from slavery,

2.16.42 and dare to look up to God and say: "Use me from now on for whatever you want. I'm of one mind with you; I'm yours. I refuse nothing that seems good to you. Lead me where you like; dress me in whatever clothes you like. Do you want me to hold office or be a private citizen, to stay or go into exile, to be poor or rich? I'll defend you on all these counts before people. I'll show what the nature of each of them really is."

2.16.43 No:

2.16.44 instead you sit in the belly of an ox and wait for your mama to feed you full. If Heracles had sat around with the people at home, what would he have been? Eurystheus, not Heracles. Come on, how many acquaintances, how many friends did he have as he went around the whole inhabited world? But nothing was dearer to him than God. That's why he was believed

17 Susa and Ecbatana were royal cities of the old Persian empire: in effect, the far end of the world.

to be the son of Zeus, and he was. So it was in obedience to God that he went around cleansing the world of injustice and lawlessness.[18]

2.16.45 But you aren't Heracles, and you can't cleanse away other people's evils; you aren't even Theseus, to cleanse Attica of its evils. Clean up your own. Cast out from here, from your own mind, instead of Procrustes and Sciron: grief, fear, craving, envy, gloating over others' misfortunes, greed, softness, lack of self-control.[19]

2.16.46 And there's no other way to cast these out than by looking to God alone, being attached to him alone, being devoted to his commands. But if you want anything else,

2.16.47 you'll follow whatever is stronger than you, wailing and groaning, always looking for the smooth flow of life outside yourself and never able to have it. For you're looking for it where it isn't, and you've given up looking for it where it is.

## CHAPTER 17: HOW TO APPLY PRECONCEPTIONS TO PARTICULAR CASES

*Philosophy starts by giving up conceit; our failure to get what we want shows we misapply our preconceptions.*

2.17.1 What is the first task of someone doing philosophy? To throw away conceit. For it's impossible for anyone to begin learning what he thinks he already knows.

2.17.2 What should be done and what shouldn't, what's good and bad, fine and shameful: we all come to the philosophers already chattering about these things every which way. On this basis we praise and blame, accuse and find fault, pass judgment on fine and shameful practices and draw distinctions between them.

2.17.3 And what do we go to the philosophers for? For what we don't think we know. And what's that? Their principles. What the

18 Eurystheus was the king who stayed at home and set Heracles his labors.
19 Procrustes and Sciron were brigands whom Theseus killed on the road to Athens.

philosophers talk about, some of us want to learn because it's clever and sharp; others, so as to make something out of it.

2.17.4 So it's ridiculous to think that someone who wants to learn one thing will learn another, or, for that matter, that someone will make progress in what he isn't learning.

2.17.5 What deceives most people is the same thing that deceived Theopompus the orator too, where he actually criticizes Plato for wanting to define every term.[20]

2.17.6 What does he say? "Did none of us before you say 'good' or 'just'? Or did we utter the words meaninglessly and emptily, without understanding what each of them is?"

2.17.7 Who's telling you, Theopompus, that we didn't have natural notions and preconceptions of each of these? But it isn't possible to apply the preconceptions to the realities that correspond to them without articulating them and considering precisely this: which reality should be brought under each of them.

2.17.8 Otherwise, say the same sort of thing to the doctors: "Who of us didn't say 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' before Hippocrates was born? Or were we just making empty noises?"

2.17.9 For we do have some preconception of what's healthy too, but we can't apply it. That's why one says, "Let him fast," and another says, "Feed him"; one says, "Bleed him," and another says, "Cup him." What's the cause? What else but that he can't properly apply the preconception of the healthy to particular cases?

2.17.10 So it is here too, with the things of life. Good and bad, beneficial and harmful: who of us doesn't talk about them? Who of us doesn't have a preconception of each of them? But is it articulated and complete?

2.17.11 Show me that. "How am I to show it?" Apply it properly to particular realities. To start with, Plato brings definitions under the preconception of the useful, and you under that of the useless.

2.17.12 Can you both be right, then? How could you be? And doesn't one person apply the preconception of the good to the

20 Theopompus of Chios, historian and orator of the fourth century BC.

reality of wealth, and another not? And the same with pleasure, and with health?

2.17.13 In general, if all of us who use these words know each of them, and not emptily, and need to take no trouble over articulating our preconceptions, why do we disagree, why do we fight, why do we blame one another?

2.17.14 And why should I bring up our fights with one another now, and dwell on them? You yourself: if you apply your preconceptions properly, why isn't your life flowing smoothly, why are you hindered?

2.17.15 Let's leave aside for now the second area, the one concerned with impulses and the expertise in duty that goes with them. Let's leave aside the third as well, the one concerned with assents.

2.17.16 I'll grant you all of that. Let's stay with the first, which gives almost tangible proof that you don't apply your preconceptions properly.

2.17.17 Right now, do you want what's possible, and possible for you? Then why are you hindered? Why isn't your life flowing smoothly? And right now, you don't try to avoid what's inevitable, do you? Then why do you run into things, why are you unfortunate? Why is it that when you want something it doesn't happen, and when you don't want it, it does?

2.17.18 For that's the greatest proof of a life that doesn't flow smoothly, and of unhappiness. I want something and it doesn't happen: and who is more wretched than me? I don't want something and it happens: and who is more wretched than me?

2.17.19 Medea couldn't bear this either, and so she went as far as killing her children. A grand-spirited act, in this respect at least. For she had the right impression of what it means for someone's wishes not to come about.

2.17.20 "So this is how I'll take revenge on the man who wronged me and treated me with contempt. And what good is it, his being in such a bad way? How is it to be done, then? I'll kill the children. But then I'll be punishing myself too. And what do I care?"

2.17.21 This is what happens when a soul of great vigor goes astray. For she didn't know where the power to do what we want lies: that we mustn't get it from outside, or by rearranging and readjusting things.

2.17.22 Don't want your husband, and nothing you want will fail to happen. Don't want him to live with you no matter what, don't want to stay in Corinth, and, in short, don't want anything but what God wants. And who will stop you, who will compel you? No more than anyone can Zeus.

2.17.23 When you have a leader like that, and want along with him and desire along with him, why are you still afraid of failing?

2.17.24 Make a gift of your desire and your aversion to poverty and wealth: you'll miss what you want and run into what you don't. To health: you'll be unfortunate. To offices, honors, your country, friends, children, in short to any of the things outside our choice. No, make a gift of them to Zeus and to the other gods:

2.17.25 hand them over to them, let them steer, let your desire and aversion take their place on their side. And where will your life still fail to flow smoothly?

2.17.26 But if you envy, you lazy fool, and pity and are jealous and tremble, and don't let a single day go by without wailing over yourself and over the gods, how can you still say you've been educated?

2.17.27 What kind of education, man? That you've worked through syllogisms and shifting arguments? Don't you want to unlearn all of this, if you can, and start again from the beginning, realizing that until now you haven't even touched the thing,

2.17.28 and from then on, starting from there, build up what comes next: how nothing will happen that you don't want, and nothing you want will fail to happen?

2.17.29 Give me one young man who has come to school with this purpose, who has become an athlete at this, and says: "As for me, goodbye to everything else. It's enough for me if I can

ever get through life unimpeded and free from grief, and lift up my neck to face things as a free man, and look up to heaven as a friend of God, afraid of nothing that can happen." Let one of you show me such a man, so that I can say:

2.17.30 Come, young man, into what's yours. It's your destiny to adorn philosophy. These possessions are yours, the books are yours, the discourses are yours.

2.17.31 Then, when he has worked hard at this area and mastered it, let him come back to me and say: "I do want to be free from passion and undisturbed; but I also want, as a pious man, a philosopher, and a conscientious one, to know what my duty is toward the gods, toward my parents, toward my brothers, toward my country, toward strangers."

2.17.32 Come on to the second area too; this one is yours as well.

2.17.33 "But I've already studied the second area thoroughly. What I'd like is to hold it securely and unshakably, not only while I'm awake but also while I'm asleep, and drunk, and in a fit of melancholy." Man, you're a god; you have great aims!

2.17.34 No: instead, "I want to know what Chrysippus says in his books on the Liar." Go hang yourself, you wretch, you and that aim of yours! And what good will it do you? You'll read the whole thing in misery, and you'll talk about it to others trembling.[21]

2.17.35 That's what you people do too. "Would you like me to read to you, brother?" "And you to me." "You write wonderfully, man." And, "You're superb in the style of Xenophon," "You in the style of Plato,"

2.17.36 "You in the style of Antisthenes." Then, having told each other your dreams, you go back to the same things. Your desires are just as before, your aversions just as before, your impulses the same; the same designs, the same purposes; you pray for the same things, you're serious about the same things. And then you don't even look for someone to remind you,

2.17.37 but you get annoyed if you hear these things. Then you say: "A heartless old man! When I left he didn't cry or say, 'What

21 The Liar was a famous logical paradox ("I am lying": is that true or false?), on which Chrysippus wrote several books.

a hard situation you're going off into, my child! If you come through safe, I'll light lamps.'" Is that what a loving man does?[22]

2.17.38 It will be a great good for you to come through safe, a fine specimen like you, and well worth lighting lamps for! For of course you must be immortal and never fall ill.

2.17.39 So, as I say, we must throw off this conceit of thinking we know something useful, and come to reason the way we approach geometry, or music;

2.17.40 otherwise we won't even come close to making progress, even if we go through all the introductions and treatises of Chrysippus, along with those of Antipater and Archedemus.[23]

## CHAPTER 18: HOW TO FIGHT AGAINST IMPRESSIONS

*Habits grow with use, so resist each impression, test it, and count the days without anger.*

2.18.1 Every habit and capacity is maintained and strengthened by the corresponding actions: the capacity for walking by walking, for running by running.

2.18.2 If you want to be a good reader, read; if a good writer, write. And when you go thirty days in a row without reading, doing something else instead, you'll see what happens.

2.18.3 In the same way, if you lie in bed for ten days, get up and try to take a fairly long walk, and you'll see how your legs give way.

2.18.4 In general, then, if you want to do something, make a habit of it; if you don't want to do something, don't do it, but get used to doing something else instead.

2.18.5 It's the same with the things of the soul. When you get angry, know that it isn't just this one bad thing that has happened to you, but that you've also strengthened the habit, and thrown dry sticks on the fire.

22 Lamps were lit in thanksgiving for a safe return.

23 Antipater of Tarsus headed the Stoic school in the second century BC.

2.18.6 When you give in to sex with someone, don't count just this one defeat, but also that you've fed your lack of self-control and made it grow.

2.18.7 For it's impossible for the corresponding actions not to implant some habits and capacities that weren't there before, and to intensify and strengthen others.

2.18.8 That, surely, is how the philosophers say infirmities of the soul grow up too. For once you've craved money, if reason is applied to make you aware of the evil, the craving stops and our ruling center is restored to its original state;

2.18.9 but if you apply nothing to treat it, it doesn't go back to the same state; instead, stirred up again by the corresponding impression, it flares into craving faster than before. And as this keeps happening, it grows calloused at last, and the infirmity makes the love of money firm.

2.18.10 For someone who has had a fever and then got over it isn't in the same condition as before he had the fever, unless he has been completely cured.

2.18.11 Something like this happens with the passions of the soul too. Traces and welts are left in it, and unless you wipe them out properly, when it's whipped again in the same places it's no longer welts it gets, but open sores.

2.18.12 So if you want not to be quick-tempered, don't feed the habit; don't throw anything on it that will make it grow. To begin with, keep quiet, and count the days on which you haven't been angry.

2.18.13 "I used to get angry every day; now every other day, then every third, then every fourth." And if you go thirty days, make a sacrifice to God. For the habit is first weakened, and then destroyed completely.

2.18.14 "Today I wasn't distressed, nor tomorrow, nor for two or three months in a row; I kept watch over myself when things happened that could provoke me." Know that you're in fine shape.

2.18.15 "Today, when I saw a handsome young man or a beautiful woman," I didn't say to myself, "If only someone could sleep

with her," and, "Lucky her husband!" For whoever says that says, "Lucky the adulterer," too.

2.18.16 Nor do I go on to picture what comes next: her there beside me, undressing, lying down next to me.

2.18.17 I pat myself on the head and say: Well done, Epictetus, you've solved a clever little sophism, much cleverer than the Master Argument.[24]

2.18.18 And if the woman is willing too, and nods and sends messages, and even touches me and comes close, and I hold back and win, that's a sophism beyond the Liar, beyond the Quiet Man. That's something to be really proud of, not propounding the Master Argument.[25]

2.18.19 So how can this be done? Want, for once, to please yourself; want to look beautiful to God. Long to become pure, with your own pure self and with God.

2.18.20 Then, when some such impression strikes you, Plato says: go to the rites of expiation, go as a suppliant to the temples of the gods who avert evil;[26]

2.18.21 it's enough, even, if you withdraw into the company of good and noble men and set about measuring yourself against them, whether you have one of the living or one of the dead.

2.18.22 Go to Socrates, and look at him lying beside Alcibiades and making light of his youthful beauty. Think what a victory that man once knew he had won over himself, what an Olympic victory, what place he took in the line of victors from Heracles on! So that, by the gods, one might rightly greet him, "Hail, marvel of a man!", and not these rotten boxers and pancratiasts, or their like, the gladiators.[27]

2.18.23 Set these things against it, and you'll conquer the impression and not be dragged along by it.

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24 The Master Argument, devised by Diodorus Cronus, was a celebrated puzzle about what is possible; it is the subject of the next chapter.

25 The Quiet Man was another logical puzzle, in which one falls silent to escape a chain of questions.

26 Plato, *Laws* 854b, prescribes these rites for someone seized by a criminal urge.

27 In Plato's *Symposium* (217–219) Alcibiades tells how he spent a night beside Socrates, who resisted his advances.

2.18.24 But first, don't let yourself be swept away by its intensity. Say: "Wait for me a little, impression. Let me see what you are and what you're about; let me test you."

2.18.25 And after that, don't let it go on picturing what comes next. Otherwise it's off with you wherever it likes. Instead, bring in some other fine and noble impression to oppose it, and throw this filthy one out.

2.18.26 And if you get used to training like this, you'll see what shoulders you get, what sinews, what muscle; but as things are, it's nothing but clever little arguments, and not one thing more.

2.18.27 The one who is truly in training is the one who trains himself against impressions like these.

2.18.28 Hold on, you wretch, don't be swept away. The contest is great, the task divine: it's for kingship, for freedom, for a smooth flow of life, for tranquility.

2.18.29 Remember God; call on him as your helper and protector, as sailors call on the Dioscuri in a storm. For what storm is greater than the one that comes from powerful impressions that knock reason out of place? And the storm itself, what else is it but an impression?[28]

2.18.30 Look: take away the fear of death, and bring on as many thunderclaps and lightning bolts as you like, and you'll find out how much calm and fair weather there is in the ruling center.

2.18.31 But if you're defeated once and say you'll win next time, and then do the same again, know that you'll end up in such a bad and weak state that later you won't even notice you're going wrong; you'll even start supplying excuses for it;

2.18.32 and then you'll confirm that Hesiod's line is true: "The man who puts things off is always wrestling with ruin."

28 The Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, were patrons of sailors.

## CHAPTER 19: TO THOSE WHO TAKE UP PHILOSOPHERS' TEACHINGS ONLY IN WORDS

*Knowing who wrote on the Master Argument is not having a judgment; Epictetus longs to see one real Stoic.*

2.19.1 The Master Argument seems to have been posed from some such starting points as these. There is a general conflict among these three propositions: that every past truth is necessary; that the impossible does not follow from the possible; and that something is possible which neither is true nor will be. Seeing this conflict, Diodorus used the plausibility of the first two to establish that nothing is possible which neither is true nor will be.

2.19.2 So one person will hold on to these two: that there is something possible which neither is true nor will be, and that the impossible does not follow from the possible; but not every past truth is necessary. That seems to be the view of Cleanthes and his followers, and Antipater largely defended them.

2.19.3 Others hold the other two: that something is possible which neither is true nor will be, and that every past truth is necessary; but the impossible does follow from the possible.

2.19.4 But it's impossible to hold all three, because of the general conflict among them.

2.19.5 So if someone asks me, "And which of them do you hold?", I'll answer that I don't know. I've received a report to this effect: that Diodorus held those two, the followers of Panthoides, I think, and of Cleanthes held the others, and the followers of Chrysippus held the others again.

2.19.6 "And you, then?" I've never applied myself to this: to testing my own impression, comparing what has been said, and forming a judgment of my own on the subject. That's why I'm no different from the literary scholar.

2.19.7 "Who was Hector's father?" "Priam." "Who were his brothers?" "Alexander and Deiphobus." "And who was their mother?" "Hecuba. That's the report I've received." "From whom?" "From

Homer. Hellanicus writes about the same things too, I believe, and others like him."[29]

2.19.8 And what more do I have than that on the Master Argument? But if I'm an empty-headed man, I astound the company, especially at a dinner party, by listing the people who have written on it.

2.19.9 "Chrysippus wrote on it brilliantly too, in the first book of his *On Possibles*. And Cleanthes wrote on it separately, and so did Archedemus. Antipater wrote on it too, not only in his *On Possibles* but also separately, in his books on the Master Argument. Haven't you read the treatise?"

2.19.10 "No, I haven't." "Read it." And what good will it do him? He'll be more of a babbler and more of a bore than he is now. For what else have you gained from reading it? What judgment have you formed on the subject? No: you'll tell us about Helen and Priam and Calypso's island, which never was and never will be.

2.19.11 And here it's no great matter to have mastered the report but formed no judgment of your own. But in ethical matters this happens to us far more than in these.

2.19.12 "Tell me about good and bad things." "Listen: 'From Ilium the wind bore me and brought me to the Cicones.' Of the things that are, some are good,[30]

2.19.13 some bad, and some indifferent. The good are the excellences and what shares in them; the bad are the vices and what shares in vice; and the indifferent are those in between: wealth, health, life, death, pleasure, pain."

2.19.14 "How do you know?" "Hellanicus says so in his *Egyptian History*." For what difference is there between saying that and saying that Diogenes says so in his *Ethics*, or Chrysippus, or Cleanthes? Have you tested any of it, then, and formed a judgment of your own?[31]

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29 Hellanicus of Lesbos was a fifth-century BC writer on myth and history.
30 The opening line of Odysseus's tale (*Odyssey* 9.39): the student recites doctrine the way he would recite Homer.
31 Diogenes here is Diogenes of Babylon, a Stoic of the second century BC.

2.19.15 Show me how you usually behave in a storm at sea. Do you remember this classification when the sail cracks and you've screamed, and some mischievous idler stands beside you and says, "Tell me, by the gods, what you were saying the other day: is being shipwrecked a vice, by any chance? Or something that shares in vice?"

2.19.16 Won't you pick up a piece of wood and let him have it? "What business have you with us, man? We're dying, and you come and make jokes!"

2.19.17 And if Caesar summons you to face a charge, do you remember the classification, if someone comes up to you as you go in, pale and trembling, and says, "Why are you trembling, man? What's this case of yours about? Is Caesar in there handing out excellence and vice to those who go in?"

2.19.18 "Why are you mocking me too, on top of my miseries?" "All the same, philosopher, tell me: why are you trembling? Isn't what's at stake death, or prison, or bodily pain, or exile, or disgrace? What else? Vice, by any chance? Something that shares in vice? So what did you use to say these things were?"

2.19.19 "What have I to do with you, man? My own miseries are enough for me." And quite right too. Your own miseries are enough for you: your baseness, your cowardice, the bragging you did as you sat in the lecture room. Why did you deck yourself out in other people's finery? Why did you call yourself a Stoic?

2.19.20 Watch yourselves like this in what you do, and you'll find out which school you belong to. You'll find that most of you are Epicureans, a few Peripatetics, and flabby ones at that.

2.19.21 For where is it that you, in practice, take excellence to be equal to everything else, or even superior? But show me a Stoic, if you have one.

2.19.22 Where, or how? Oh, you can show me thousands reciting the little Stoic arguments. But do these same people recite the Epicurean ones any worse? And aren't they just as precise with the Peripatetic ones too?

2.19.23 So who is a Stoic? Just as we call a statue "Phidian" when it has been shaped by the art of Phidias, so show me someone shaped by the judgments he talks about.

2.19.24 Show me someone who is sick and happy, in danger and happy, dying and happy, exiled and happy, disgraced and happy. Show me! By the gods, I long to see a Stoic!

2.19.25 But you can't show me one who is fully shaped; then show me one being shaped, one who is inclined that way. Do me this kindness. Don't begrudge an old man the sight of something he hasn't seen to this day.

2.19.26 Do you think you're going to show me Phidias's Zeus, or his Athena, a work of ivory and gold? Let one of you show me the soul of a person who wants to be of one mind with God, and never again to blame God or man, never to fail to get anything, never to run into anything, never to be angry, never to envy, never to be jealous (why go round in circles?),

2.19.27 who longs to become a god instead of a man, and who, in this poor dead body of his, is set on fellowship with Zeus. Show me! But you can't. So why do you make fools of yourselves and cheat everyone else?

2.19.28 And why do you dress up in someone else's costume and walk around as thieves and robbers of names and things that don't belong to you at all?

2.19.29 And now I am your teacher, and you're being educated with me. My aim is this: to turn you out unhindered, uncompelled, unimpeded, free, with your lives flowing smoothly, happy, looking to God in everything, small and great. And you're here to learn these things and practice them.

2.19.30 So why don't you finish the work, if you too have the right aim, and I have, besides the right aim, the right preparation?

2.19.31 What's missing? When I see a carpenter with his material lying ready beside him, I expect the finished work. Well, here too there's the carpenter, and there's the material; what are we missing?

2.19.32 Can't the thing be taught? It can. Then isn't it up to us? Yes: it alone of all things. Neither wealth is up to us, nor health, nor reputation, nor anything else at all, except the right use of impressions. This alone is by nature unhindered, this alone unimpeded.

2.19.33 So why don't you finish? Tell me the cause. For it lies either with me, or with you, or with the nature of the thing. The thing itself is feasible, and the only thing that's up to us. What remains, then, is that it lies either with me or with you, or, more truly, with both. Well then?

2.19.34 Would you like us to start bringing an aim like this here at last? Let's let go of everything up till now. Let's just begin, trust me, and you'll see.

## CHAPTER 20: AGAINST EPICUREANS AND ACADEMICS

*Those who deny fellowship and knowledge rely on both in their own lives and writings.*

2.20.1 Sound and evident truths are necessarily used even by those who contradict them. And one might almost take this as the strongest sign that something is evident: that even the person who contradicts it finds himself compelled to make use of it.

2.20.2 For example, if someone denied that anything is universally true, he'd obviously have to make the contrary negative statement: "Nothing is universally true." Slave! Not even that.

2.20.3 For what else is this but, in effect, "If anything is universal, it's false"?

2.20.4 Again, suppose someone comes forward and says, "Know that nothing is knowable, but everything is uncertain"; or another, "Believe me and you'll benefit: you shouldn't believe anyone"; or yet another, "Learn from me, man, that it isn't possible to learn anything. I'm telling you this, and I'll teach it to you, if you like."

2.20.5 How do these differ from—who exactly? —those who call themselves Academics? "People, assent to the fact that nobody assents; believe us that nobody believes anybody."

2.20.6 So too Epicurus, when he wants to abolish the natural fellowship of human beings with one another, makes use of the very thing he is abolishing.

2.20.7 For what does he say? "Don't be deceived, people, don't be led astray, don't go wrong: there is no natural fellowship among rational beings. Believe me. Those who say otherwise are deceiving you and misleading you with false reasoning."

2.20.8 Then what's it to you? Let us be deceived. Will you be any worse off if all the rest of us are persuaded that we have a natural fellowship with one another and must guard it in every way? On the contrary: you'll be much better off, and safer.

2.20.9 Man, why do you worry on our behalf, why do you stay awake for our sake, why do you light your lamp, why do you get up, why do you write such enormous books? So that none of us is deceived into thinking the gods care for human beings, or supposes that the essence of the good is anything other than pleasure?

2.20.10 For if that's how things are, lie down and sleep, and do what a worm does, since that's what you've judged yourself fit for: eat and drink and have sex and empty your bowels and snore.

2.20.11 What do you care how other people will think about these things, whether soundly or not? What have you to do with us? Do you care about sheep because they offer themselves to us to be shorn and milked and, in the end, butchered?

2.20.12 Wouldn't it be something to pray for, if people could be charmed and spellbound by the Stoics into dozing off, and offering themselves to you and your like to be shorn and milked?

2.20.13 Shouldn't you have said these things to your fellow Epicureans, and hidden them from the others, and above all persuaded those others, before anyone, that we're social by nature and that self-control is a good thing, so that everything would be kept safe for you?

2.20.14 Or should this fellowship be kept with some people and not with others? With whom should it be kept, then? With those

who keep it in return, or with those who violate it? And who violates it more than you people who hold these views?

2.20.15 So what was it that roused him from his sleep and forced him to write what he wrote? What else but the strongest of all things in human beings: nature, dragging him to her own will, unwilling and groaning?

2.20.16 "Since you hold these antisocial views, write them down and leave them to others, and stay up at night over them, and by your own actions become the accuser of your own judgments."

2.20.17 And then we say that Orestes, hounded by the Furies, was roused from his sleep; but aren't the Furies and Avengers harsher with this man? They roused him as he slept and wouldn't let him rest, but forced him to proclaim his own evils, the way madness and wine drive the Galli.[32]

2.20.18 That's how strong and invincible human nature is. For how can a vine move not like a vine but like an olive, or an olive, again, not like an olive but like a vine? It's impossible, unthinkable.

2.20.19 So it isn't possible for a human being, either, to lose human motions completely; even men who are castrated can't cut off men's desires, at any rate.

2.20.20 In the same way Epicurus cut off everything that belongs to a man, and to a head of household, a citizen and a friend; but human desires he didn't cut off. He couldn't, any more than those sorry Academics can throw away or blind their own senses, though that's what they've worked hardest of all to do.

2.20.21 What a misfortune! Someone receives from nature measures and standards for recognizing the truth, and doesn't take the trouble to add to them and work out what's lacking; quite the opposite: whatever he has that can recognize the truth, he tries to remove and destroy.

32 The Galli were the castrated priests of the goddess Cybele, known for their ecstatic frenzies.

## PIETY ARGUED AWAY

*Epictetus mocks the philosopher who argues the gods away while eating bread and consulting oracles.*

2.20.22 What do you say, philosopher? What do you think piety and holiness are? "If you like, I'll prove that they're good." Yes, do prove it, so that our fellow citizens may be converted and honor the divine, and stop at last being careless about the most important things. "So have you got the proofs?" I have, and I'm grateful.

2.20.23 "Well, since you like these so much, take the opposite: that gods don't exist, or, if they do, they don't care for human beings, and we have nothing in common with them; and that this piety and holiness most people chatter about is a lie told by impostors and sophists, or, by Zeus, by lawgivers, to frighten and restrain wrongdoers."

2.20.24 Well done, philosopher! You've done our citizens a service; you've won back our young people, who were already leaning toward contempt for the divine.

2.20.25 "What's this? Don't you like that? Now take how justice is nothing, how self-respect is foolishness, how a father is nothing, how a son is nothing."

2.20.26 Well done, philosopher! Keep at it, persuade the young, so that we'll have more people who feel and talk the way you do. It's from arguments like these that our well-governed cities grew great; it was through these arguments that Sparta came to be; these are the convictions Lycurgus instilled in the Spartans through his laws and his education: that being a slave is no more shameful than fine, and being free no more fine than shameful. Those who died at Thermopylae died because of these judgments. And what other arguments made the Athenians abandon their city?[33]

2.20.27 And then the people who say these things marry and have children and take part in public life, and appoint them-

selves priests and prophets. Of whom? Of gods who don't exist. And they themselves consult the Pythia, to learn falsehoods, and interpret the oracles for others. What monstrous shamelessness and fraud![34]

2.20.28 Man, what are you doing? You refute yourself every day, and you won't give up these feeble arguments? When you eat, where do you bring your hand? To your mouth, or to your eye? When you bathe, what do you step into? When did you ever call a pot a dish, or a ladle a spit?

2.20.29 If I were the slave of one of them, even if I had to be flayed by him every day, I'd torment him. "Boy, put some oil in the bath." I'd put in fish sauce and go and pour it over his head. "What's this?" "I had an impression of oil that I couldn't tell apart from the real thing, exactly like it, I swear by your fortune."

2.20.30 "Give me the barley soup." I'd fill a dish with vinegar and fish sauce and bring it to him. "Didn't I ask for the barley soup?" "Yes, master; this is barley soup." "Isn't this vinegar and fish sauce?" "Why that any more than barley soup?" "Take it and smell it, take it and taste it." "But how do you know, if our senses deceive us?"

2.20.31 If I had three or four fellow slaves who agreed with me, I'd make him burst with rage and hang himself, or else change his mind. But as it is, they make game of us, using all the gifts of nature while abolishing them in argument.

2.20.32 Grateful people, and so full of self-respect! If nothing else, they eat bread every day, and have the nerve to say, "We don't know whether there is any Demeter, or Kore, or Pluto";[35]

2.20.33 not to mention that they enjoy night and day, the changes of the seasons, the stars, the sea, the earth, the help of other people, and aren't moved by any of it in the least, but only

33 Lycurgus was Sparta's legendary lawgiver. In 480 BC Spartans died holding the pass at Thermopylae, and the Athenians abandoned their city to the Persians rather than submit.

34 The Pythia was the priestess who spoke Apollo's oracles at Delphi.

35 Demeter, goddess of grain, her daughter Kore (Persephone), and Pluto, god of the underworld, were worshipped together as givers of the harvest.

look to spew up their little problem and, having given their stomachs a workout, go off to the bath.

2.20.34 What they'll say, and about what, and to whom, and what will come of these arguments of theirs, they haven't given a moment's thought: whether some well-born young man, hearing these arguments, may be influenced by them, or, once influenced, may lose all the seeds of his nobility;

2.20.35 whether we may be giving an adulterer pretexts for shamelessness about what he does; whether someone who embezzles public funds may seize on some clever excuse from these arguments; whether someone who neglects his parents may gain extra boldness from them too.

2.20.36 So what, in your view, is good or bad, shameful or fine? This or that? Well then? Would anyone still argue with any of these people, or give or accept an argument, or try to change their minds?

2.20.37 By Zeus, you'd have a much better hope of changing the minds of debauchees than of people so deaf and blind to their own evils.

## CHAPTER 21: ON INCONSISTENCY

*People admit faults they think involuntary and hide others; students take home the faults they bring.*

2.21.1 Some things people admit readily, others not readily. No one will admit that he's foolish or stupid; quite the opposite, you'll hear everyone saying, "I wish I had as much luck as I have sense."

2.21.2 But they readily admit they're timid, and say, "I'm rather timid, I admit; but otherwise you won't find me a fool."

2.21.3 No one will readily admit that he lacks self-control; that he's unjust, not at all; that he's envious or a busybody, hardly ever; that he's soft-hearted, most people will.

2.21.4 So what's the reason? The chief one is inconsistency and disturbance in their ideas about good and bad things; but differ-

ent people have different reasons, and, more or less, whatever they imagine to be shameful they won't admit at all.

2.21.5 Being timid, they imagine, is a sign of a considerate character, and so is being soft-hearted; but being stupid is the mark of a slave through and through. And offenses against society they won't own up to at all.

2.21.6 With most faults, what chiefly leads them to admit them is that they imagine there's something involuntary in them, as with timidity and soft-heartedness.

2.21.7 And if someone does grudgingly admit that he lacks self-control, he adds that he's in love, so as to be forgiven as for something involuntary. But injustice they don't imagine to be involuntary at all. There's also something involuntary about jealousy, they think; that's why they grudgingly admit to that too.

2.21.8 Living among people like this, then, so disturbed, so ignorant of what they're saying, or of what evils they have, or whether they have them, or why they have them, or how they'll be rid of them, I think it's worth watching oneself constantly as well:

2.21.9 "Could I be one of them too? What impression do I have of myself? How do I treat myself? Do I too treat myself as a sensible man, as a self-controlled man? Do I too ever say that I've been educated to face whatever comes?

2.21.10 Am I aware, as someone who knows nothing should be, that I know nothing? Do I go to my teacher ready to obey, as I would to an oracle? Or do I too come into the school with a runny nose, just to learn the history of doctrines and to understand the books I didn't understand before, and, if it so happens, to explain them to others?"

2.21.11 Man, at home you've come to blows with your slave, you've turned the house upside down, you've upset the neighbors; and you come to me putting on a solemn face like a wise man, and sit passing judgment on how I explained the text, how I babbled whatever came into my head?

2.21.12 You've come here envious, and crushed because nothing is sent to you from home; and you sit there while the discourses are going on, thinking of nothing but how things stand between you and your father, or your brother.

2.21.13 "What are the people back home saying about me? Right now they think I'm making progress, and they're saying, 'He'll come back knowing everything.'

2.21.14 I did want to learn everything somehow and go back some day, but it takes a lot of work, and nobody sends me anything, and in Nicopolis the baths are lousy, and things are bad at home and bad here."

2.21.15 And then they say, "Nobody gets any benefit from the school." Well, who comes to school, who, I ask you, to be cured? Who comes to hand over his judgments to be purged? Who comes to realize what he needs?

2.21.16 So why are you surprised if you carry away from school exactly what you brought to it? For you don't come to put these things aside, or correct them, or take others in their place.

2.21.17 How could you? Not even close. Look at this instead: whether you get what you come for. You want to chatter about principles. Well then? Don't you become bigger babblers? Doesn't the school give you material for showing off your little principles? Don't you analyze syllogisms and shifting arguments? Don't you work through the premises of the Liar, and hypothetical arguments? So why are you still annoyed if you get what you're here for?

2.21.18 "Yes; but if my child dies, or my brother, or if I have to die or be tortured, what good will stuff like that do me?"

2.21.19 Is that what you came for? Is that why you sit beside me? Is that why you ever lit your lamp or stayed up at night? Or when you went out into the colonnade, did you ever set yourself an impression to work on instead of a syllogism, and examine it together with the others?

2.21.20 When, ever? And then you say, "Principles are useless." To whom? To those who don't use them as they should. For eye salves aren't useless to those who apply them when and as they

should; poultices aren't useless; jumping weights aren't useless: they're useless to some people, and useful again to others.

2.21.21 If you ask me now, "Are syllogisms useful?", I'll tell you they're useful, and if you like, I'll prove how. "So have they done me any good?" Man, you didn't ask whether they're useful to you, did you, but whether they're useful in general?

2.21.22 Let someone with dysentery ask me too whether vinegar is useful: I'll say it's useful. "Useful to me, then?" I'll say, "No." First see to getting your flux stopped and your little ulcers healed. And you too, gentlemen: first treat your ulcers, stop your fluxes, calm your minds, bring them to school undistracted; and you'll find out what power reason has.

## CHAPTER 22: ON FRIENDSHIP

*Only the wise can love, for friendship lasts only where people place their good in choice rather than externals.*

2.22.1 What someone is serious about, he naturally loves. Are people serious about bad things, then? Not at all. About things that have nothing to do with them, perhaps? Not those either.

2.22.2 It remains, then, that they're serious only about good things; and if they're serious about them, they love them too.

2.22.3 So whoever has knowledge of good things would know how to love too; but someone who can't distinguish good things from bad, and what is neither from both, how could he still be able to love? Loving, then, belongs to the person of understanding alone.

2.22.4 "How so?" someone says. "I'm a fool, and yet I love my child."

2.22.5 —By the gods, I'm amazed that you've admitted you're a fool in the first place. What do you lack? Don't you use your senses, don't you distinguish impressions, don't you give your body suitable food, and clothing, and shelter?

2.22.6 So why do you admit you're a fool? Because, by Zeus, you're often knocked off balance by your impressions and upset, and their persuasiveness gets the better of you. At one time you

think these things are good, then the very same things bad, and later neither; and in general you grieve, fear, envy, are upset, change your mind. That's why you admit you're a fool.

2.22.7 And in loving, don't you change? Wealth and pleasure and, in short, things themselves you think good at one time and bad at another; and the same people, don't you think them good at one time and bad at another, feel friendly toward them at one time and hostile at another, praise them at one time and blame them at another? —Yes, that happens to me too.

2.22.8 —Well then? Do you think someone who has been deceived about a person is his friend? —Not at all. —Nor someone who has chosen to be well disposed toward him, but fickly? —Not him either. —And someone who abuses a person now, but later admires him?

2.22.9 —Not him either. —Well? Have you never seen little dogs fawning on each other and playing together, so that you'd say, "Nothing could be friendlier"? But to see what friendship is, throw a piece of meat between them, and you'll find out.

2.22.10 Throw a bit of land between you and your child, too, and you'll find out how soon your child wants to bury you, and how you pray for your child to die. Then you, in your turn: "What a child I've raised! He's been itching to carry me out for burial for ages!"

2.22.11 Throw in a pretty girl, and the old man and the young one both love her; or else a scrap of glory. And if you have to face danger, you'll say the words of Admetus's father: "[You're glad to see the light; do you think your father isn't?] / You want to see the light; do you think your father doesn't?"[36]

2.22.12 Do you think he didn't love his own child when the boy was small, or wasn't in agony when he had a fever, or didn't often say, "I wish it were me who had the fever instead"? Then, when the moment came and drew near, look what words they utter!

2.22.13 Weren't Eteocles and Polynices born of the same mother and the same father? Weren't they brought up together, didn't

they live together, drink together, sleep together, often kiss each other? So that, I think, if anyone had seen them, he'd have laughed at the philosophers for the paradoxes they tell about friendship.[37]

2.22.14 But when the throne fell between them like a piece of meat, look what they say: "Where will you take your stand before the towers?" —"Why do you ask me this?" / "I'll face you and I'll kill you." —"I too am gripped by that desire." And those are the prayers they pray.

2.22.15 For in general—don't be deceived—every living creature is attached to nothing so much as to its own interest. So whatever seems to stand in the way of that, whether it's a brother or a father or a child, a beloved or a lover, it hates it, spurns it, curses it.

2.22.16 Nothing is so naturally loved as one's own advantage. That is father, and brother, and kin, and country, and God.

2.22.17 At any rate, when the gods seem to stand in the way of it, we curse them too, overturn their statues and set fire to their temples, as Alexander ordered the temples of Asclepius burned when his beloved died.[38]

2.22.18 That's why, if someone puts his advantage in the same place as piety, and what's fine, and country, parents and friends, all of these are safe. But if he puts his advantage in one place, and friends, country, kin and justice itself in another, they all go under, outweighed by his advantage.

2.22.19 For wherever the "I" and the "mine" are, that's the way the creature is bound to lean. If they're in the flesh, that's where the controlling power must be; if in choice, it must be there; if in externals, there.

2.22.20 If, then, I am where my choice is, then and only then will I be the friend I ought to be, and the son, and the father. For then

36 In Euripides' *Alcestis*, Admetus's father Pheres refuses to die in his son's place and answers his reproaches with these words.

37 The sons of Oedipus, who killed each other fighting over the throne of Thebes; the lines quoted next are from Euripides' *Phoenician Women*.

38 Alexander the Great, after the death of his companion Hephaestion in 324 BC. Arrian reports the story in his *Anabasis* (7.14).

it will be to my advantage to keep up the trustworthy man, the self-respecting, the patient, the self-restrained and helpful man, and to preserve my relationships.

2.22.21 But if I put myself in one place and the fine in another, then Epicurus's argument gains strength, declaring either that the fine is nothing at all, or, at most, what people think well of.

2.22.22 It was through this ignorance that the Athenians and the Spartans fell out, and the Thebans with both, and the Great King with Greece, and the Macedonians with both, and now the Romans with the Getae. And earlier still, the events at Troy happened for these reasons.[39]

2.22.23 Paris was Menelaus's guest-friend, and if anyone had seen how warmly they treated each other, he wouldn't have believed anyone who told him they weren't friends. But a morsel was tossed between them, a pretty little woman, and over it came war.

2.22.24 So now too, when you see friends, or brothers, who seem to be of one mind, don't pronounce straight off on their friendship, not even if they swear to it, not even if they say they can't bear to be parted from each other.

2.22.25 The ruling center of a bad man isn't trustworthy. It's unstable, undiscerning, overpowered now by one impression, now by another.

2.22.26 Don't examine what other people examine, whether they come from the same parents and were brought up together and under the same tutor. Examine only this: where they place their advantage, outside or in their choice.

2.22.27 If outside, don't call them friends, any more than trustworthy, or steady, or confident, or free. No, don't even call them human beings, if you have any sense.

2.22.28 For it isn't a human judgment that makes them bite and abuse each other, and take over the wilds, or the marketplaces as if they were the mountains, and show off the ways of bandits in the law courts. Nor is it a human judgment that turns out the

39 The Getae were a Thracian people on the lower Danube, often identified with the Dacians; Trajan fought wars against the Dacians in AD 101–106.

intemperate, the adulterers and the seducers, or any of the other wrongs people commit against each other through this one single judgment: placing themselves and what is theirs among things outside their choice.

2.22.29 But if you hear that these people truly believe that the good lies only where choice is, where the right use of impressions is, don't bother any more about whether they're son and father, or brothers, or have long been schoolmates and companions. Knowing this alone, declare with confidence that they're friends, just as you'd declare them trustworthy and just.

2.22.30 For where else is friendship to be found than where there is trustworthiness, self-respect, where what they give each other is the fine, and nothing else?

2.22.31 "But he's looked after me all this time; didn't he love me?" How do you know, slave, whether he looked after you the way he sponges his shoes, or his pack animal? How do you know that when you've lost your usefulness as a utensil he won't throw you out like a broken plate?

2.22.32 "But she's my wife, and we've lived together all this time." And how long was Eriphyle with Amphiaraus, and the mother of his children, and plenty of them?[40]

2.22.33 But a necklace came between them. And what is a necklace? The judgment about things like that. That was the brutish thing, that was what cut the friendship apart, what wouldn't let the wife be a wife, [the] mother a mother.

2.22.34 And whoever among you is set on being a friend to someone, or on winning someone else as a friend, let him cut out these judgments, hate them, drive them out of his own soul.

2.22.35 And in this way, first of all, he won't be abusing himself, fighting with himself, full of regret, tormenting himself;

2.22.36 and then, toward another person, he'll be entirely straightforward with someone like himself, and tolerant of someone unlike himself, gentle with him, kind, forgiving, as toward someone ignorant, someone going wrong about the most

40 Bribed with a golden necklace, Eriphyle persuaded her husband Amphiaraus to join the expedition against Thebes, on which she knew he would die.

important things. He'll be harsh with no one, since he knows full well Plato's saying, that every soul is deprived of the truth against its will.

2.22.37 Otherwise you'll do everything else that friends do: drink together, share a tent, sail together, even be born of the same parents. So do snakes. But neither they nor you are friends, as long as you keep these brutish and foul judgments.

## CHAPTER 23: ON THE FACULTY OF EXPRESSION

*Expression has real value, but choice ranks above it; fine style is only an inn on the road.*

2.23.1 Everyone would read a book with more pleasure and more ease if it were written in clearer letters; so too everyone would more easily listen to speeches expressed in words that are both graceful and becoming.

2.23.2 So we mustn't say that there's no faculty of expression. That's the mark of a man at once impious and cowardly. Impious, because he dishonors the gifts that come from God, as if he were doing away with the usefulness of the faculty of sight, or of hearing, or of speech itself.

2.23.3 Did God give you eyes for nothing, then? Did he mix into them for nothing a spirit so strong and so ingenious that it reaches far out and takes the imprint of the shapes of what's seen?

2.23.4 And what messenger is so swift and so careful? Was it for nothing that he made the air in between so active and so taut that sight passes through it as it's somehow stretched? Was it for nothing he made light, without which none of the rest would be any use?

2.23.5 Man, don't be ungrateful, and don't forget the higher things either. For seeing and hearing, and, by Zeus, for life itself and what sustains it, for grain, for wine, for olive oil, give thanks to God;

2.23.6 but remember that he has given you something else, better than all of these: the thing that will use them, test them, and reckon the worth of each.

2.23.7 For what is it that pronounces on each of these faculties, how much each is worth? Is it each faculty itself? Have you ever heard the faculty of sight say anything about itself, or the faculty of hearing? [Or wheat? Or barley? Or a horse? Or a dog?] No: they've been appointed as servants and slaves, to serve the faculty that uses impressions.

2.23.8 And if you ask what each thing is worth, whom do you ask? Who answers you? How, then, can any other faculty be superior to this one, which uses the rest as its servants and itself tests and pronounces on each of them?

2.23.9 For which of them knows what it is itself and what it's worth? Which of them knows when it should be used and when not? What is it that opens and shuts the eyes, turns them away from what it should and directs them to other things? The faculty of sight? No, the faculty of choice. What is it that shuts and opens the ears?

2.23.10 What is it that makes us curious and inquisitive, or again unmoved by what's said? The faculty of hearing?

2.23.11 None other than the faculty of choice. Then, when it sees that it's surrounded by all the other faculties, blind and deaf, unable to perceive anything except the very tasks they've been appointed to perform in its service, while it alone sees sharply and surveys both the others, how much each is worth, and itself —is it going to tell us that something other than itself is the most excellent?

2.23.12 And what does an eye do, once it's opened, except see? But whether one should look at someone's wife, and how—what tells you that?

2.23.13 The faculty of choice. And whether one should believe what's said or disbelieve it, and if one believes it, whether to be provoked or not—what tells you that?

2.23.14 Isn't it the faculty of choice? And this faculty of expression and ornamenting words, if it really is a faculty of its own,

what else does it do, when there's talk about something, but dress up the little words and arrange them, as hairdressers do hair?

2.23.15 But whether it's better to speak or to keep quiet, better this way or that, whether this is fitting or not, and the right moment and use for each—what else tells you that but the faculty of choice? Do you want it, then, to come forward and vote against itself?

2.23.16 "What then?" someone says. "If that's how things are, can what serves be superior to what it serves—the horse to the rider, the dog to the hunter, the instrument to the lyre-player, the attendants to the king?" —What is it that does the using?

2.23.17 Choice. What takes care of everything? Choice. What destroys the whole man, sometimes by starvation, sometimes by the noose, sometimes over a cliff? Choice.

2.23.18 Then what is stronger than this in human beings? And how can what is hindered be stronger than what is unhindered? What things are by nature able to hinder the faculty of sight?

2.23.19 Both choice and things outside our choice. The same with the faculty of hearing, and likewise with the faculty of speech. But what is by nature able to hinder choice? Nothing outside our choice; only choice itself, when it's been perverted. That's why it alone becomes vice, or it alone excellence.

2.23.20 So a faculty this great, set over all the others, is to come forward and tell us that the flesh is the most excellent of things! Not even if the flesh itself said it was the most excellent would anyone put up with it.

2.23.21 As it is, Epicurus, what is it that declares this? What wrote *On the End*, the *Physics*, *On the Canon*? What let your beard grow long? What wrote, when it was dying, "Spending our last and at the same time blessed day"?[41]

2.23.22 The flesh, or choice? Then you admit having something better than this, and you're not mad? Are you really so blind and deaf?

41 Works of Epicurus: *On the End* (the goal of life), the *Physics*, and *The Canon* (on the criterion of truth). His deathbed letter is preserved in Diogenes Laertius 10.22.

2.23.23 What then? Does anyone dishonor the other faculties? Certainly not. Does anyone say there's no use or advancement the faculty of choice? Certainly not. That would be senseless, impious, ungrateful to God. No, he gives each its due worth.

2.23.24 For there's some use in a donkey too, but not as much as in an ox; in a dog too, but not as much as in a household slave; in a household slave too, but not as much as in one's fellow citizens; in them too, but not as much as in the magistrates.

2.23.25 Still, just because some things are better, we mustn't disdain the usefulness the others provide. The faculty of expression has some worth too, but not as much as the faculty of choice.

2.23.26 So when I say this, let no one think I'm telling you to neglect expression—any more than your eyes, or ears, or hands, or feet, or clothes, or shoes.

2.23.27 But if you ask me, "What, then, is the most excellent of things?" what am I to say? The faculty of expression? I can't. The faculty of choice, when it becomes right.

2.23.28 For this is what uses both that faculty and all the others, small and great. When it goes right, a man becomes good [good]; when it fails, a man becomes bad;

2.23.29 it's through it that we're unfortunate or fortunate, that we blame one another or are well pleased; in short, it's what brings about unhappiness when it's overlooked, and happiness when it gets attention.

2.23.30 But to abolish the faculty of expression and say that in truth there's no such thing is not only ungrateful to those who gave it, but cowardly too.

2.23.31 For a person like that seems to me to be afraid that if there is some faculty in this area, we won't be able to despise it.

2.23.32 Those who say there's no difference between beauty and ugliness are the same sort. So was it possible to be affected the same way seeing Thersites as seeing Achilles? The same way by Helen as by any woman at all?[42]

2.23.33 This too is foolish and boorish, the talk of people who don't know the nature of each thing and are afraid that if someone notices the difference, he'll be swept off his feet at once and go away beaten.

2.23.34 No, the great thing is this: to leave each thing the faculty it has, and having left it, to see what that faculty is worth, and to learn what is the most excellent of things, and to pursue that in everything, to make it your serious concern, treating everything else as secondary to it—without neglecting those other things either, as far as you can.

2.23.35 For the eyes must be looked after too—not as the most excellent thing, but for the sake of the most excellent; because that will not be in its natural state unless it reasons well about these things and chooses some over others.

2.23.36 What is it, then, that happens? It's as if someone on his way home to his own country, passing a fine inn, took a liking to the inn and stayed on there.

2.23.37 Man, you've forgotten your purpose. You weren't traveling to this, but through it. "But it's lovely." And how many other inns are lovely, how many meadows? Simply as places to pass through.

2.23.38 Your purpose was this: to get back to your country, to relieve your family of their worry, to do a citizen's part yourself, to marry, have children, hold the customary offices.

2.23.39 For you didn't come to pick out the lovelier spots for us, but to spend your life where you were born and where you're enrolled as a citizen. Something like that is what happens here too.

2.23.40 Since one has to reach perfection through reason and this kind of teaching, and purify one's own choice and make right the faculty that uses impressions; and since the teaching has to be delivered through certain principles, in a certain style, and with a certain variety and subtlety in the principles,

2.23.41 some people are captivated by these very things and stay put right there, one by the style, another by syllogisms, another

42 Thersites is the ugliest man at Troy in Homer's *Iliad* (2.216–219).

by shifting arguments, another by some other inn of that kind; and staying on, they rot away, as among the Sirens.

2.23.42 Man, your purpose was to make yourself able to use the impressions that strike you in accordance with nature: in desire never failing to get, in aversion never falling into what you avoid, never unlucky, never miserable, free, unhindered, unconstrained, in harmony with the governance of Zeus, obeying it, well pleased with it, blaming no one, accusing no one, able to say these lines with your whole soul: "Lead me, Zeus, and you too, Destiny."[43]

2.23.43 And then, with this purpose before you, because you've taken a liking to some little turn of phrase, to certain principles, you stay put there and choose to settle down, forgetting the people at home, and you say, "These things are lovely"? Who says they aren't lovely?

2.23.44 But as a way through, as inns. For what prevents someone who speaks like Demosthenes from being unlucky? What prevents someone who analyzes syllogisms like Chrysippus from being wretched, grieving, envious, in short disturbed and unhappy?

2.23.45 Nothing at all. So you see that these were inns, worth nothing, and the purpose was something else.

2.23.46 When I say this to some people, they think I'm running down the study of speaking, or of principles. It's not that I'm running down, but spending endless time on these things and setting one's hopes there.

2.23.47 If anyone harms his listeners by presenting this view, count me as one of those who do harm. But I can't see one thing as the most excellent and most important and call something else that, just to please you.

43 The opening of a prayer by the Stoic Cleanthes (third century BC), quoted in full in the *Handbook* (53).

## CHAPTER 24: TO ONE WHOM HE DID NOT THINK WORTH SPEAKING TO

*A listener must show himself fit to hear; Epictetus has nothing to say to one who doesn't stir him.*

2.24.1 When someone said to him, "I've often come to you wanting to hear you, and you've never answered me;

2.24.2 and now, if possible, I beg you to say something to me," he replied: "Do you think that just as there's an art of anything else, so there's an art of speaking, and that the man who has it will speak with skill, and the man who doesn't, without it?"

2.24.3 —I do. —Then the man who through speaking both benefits himself and is able to benefit others would be speaking with skill, while the man who is rather harmed, and does harm, would be unskilled in this art of speaking? You'd find some being harmed and some being benefited.

2.24.4 And do all those who listen benefit from what they hear, or would you find among them too some benefited and some harmed? —Among them too, he said. —So here too, those who listen with skill are benefited, and those who listen without it are harmed?

2.24.5 —He agreed. —So there is a skill in listening, just as there is in speaking? —So it seems.

2.24.6 —If you like, look at it this way too. Whose job do you think it is to play an instrument musically? —The musician's. —And what about this:

2.24.7 whose job do you think it is to make a statue as it should be made? —The sculptor's. —And does looking at one with skill seem to you to need no art at all? —That needs one too.

2.24.8 —Then if speaking as one should is the business of the skilled person, you see that listening with benefit is the business of the skilled person too?

2.24.9 Let's leave aside for the moment, if you like, listening perfectly and with benefit, since we're both far from anything of the kind;

2.24.10 but this, I think, anyone would grant: that whoever is going to listen to philosophers needs at least a certain amount of practice in listening. Or not?

2.24.11 So what am I to talk to you about? Show me. What can you listen to? About good and bad things? Good and bad for what? A horse? —No. —An ox? —No. —What then?

2.24.12 A human being? —Yes. —Do we know, then, what a human being is, what his nature is, what our concept of him is? And are our ears bored open to this at all? Well, do you have any notion what nature is, or can you follow me at all when I speak?

2.24.13 Shall I use a demonstration with you, then? How? Do you understand this very thing, what a demonstration is, or how something is demonstrated, or by what means? Or what things resemble a demonstration without being one?

2.24.14 Do you know what is true, or what is false? What follows from what, what conflicts with what, or is inconsistent or discordant?

2.24.15 Well, shall I stir you to philosophy? How am I to point out to you the conflict among most people, the way they disagree about good and bad, advantageous and disadvantageous, when you don't know this very thing, what conflict is? So show me what I'll achieve by talking with you. Stir up my eagerness.

2.24.16 Just as the right grass, when it shows itself to a sheep, stirs its eagerness to eat, but if you set a stone or bread before it, it won't be stirred, so we too have a certain natural eagerness to speak, when the listener shows himself to be somebody, when he himself excites us. But if he lies there like a stone or a clump of grass, how can he stir desire in a man?

2.24.17 Does the vine say to the farmer, "Take care of me"? No: by showing of itself that it will repay him if he takes care of it, it invites him to take care of it.

2.24.18 Charming, lively children—whom don't they invite to play with them, and crawl with them, and babble with them? But who's eager to play with a donkey, or bray along with it? Even if it's small, it's still a little donkey.

2.24.19 Why, then, don't you say anything to me? —I have only this to tell you: that the man who doesn't know who he is, what he was born for, what kind of world this is he's in and with whom he shares it, what the good things are and the bad, the fine and the shameful; who can't follow an argument or a demonstration, or tell what's true or false, and can't distinguish them—he won't desire in accordance with nature, or avoid, or have an impulse, or form a purpose; he won't assent, won't deny, won't suspend judgment—nothing at all. He'll go about deaf and blind, seeming to be somebody, and being nobody.

2.24.20 Is this the first time things have been like this? Haven't all the errors and misfortunes, ever since there's been a human race, come about through this ignorance?

2.24.21 Why did Agamemnon and Achilles quarrel? Wasn't it because they didn't know what is advantageous and disadvantageous? Doesn't one say it's to their advantage to give Chryseis back to her father, and the other that it isn't? Doesn't one say he should take another man's prize, and the other that he shouldn't? Wasn't it because of this that they forgot both who they were and what they had come for?

2.24.22 Come now, man, what did you come for? To get yourself mistresses, or to fight? "To fight." Whom? The Trojans or the Greeks? "The Trojans." So you leave Hector alone and draw your sword on your own king?

2.24.23 And you, my good sir, neglecting a king's work—"to whom the people are entrusted, and so many cares belong" —are you brawling over a little girl with the most warlike of your allies, whom you ought to court and protect in every way? And you turn out worse than a smart high priest, who takes every care of his fine gladiators? You see what ignorance of what's advantageous does?[44]

2.24.24 "But I'm rich too." Richer than Agamemnon, then? "But I'm good-looking too." Better-looking than Achilles, then? "But I

44 The quotation is *Iliad* 2.25. The high priest of the imperial cult in a province paid for gladiatorial games, and so looked after his gladiators.

have lovely hair too." And didn't Achilles have lovelier hair, and blond? And he didn't comb it prettily or style it.

2.24.25 "But I'm strong too." Can you lift a stone as big as Hector or Ajax could, then? "But I'm well born too." With a goddess for a mother, then? With a father descended from Zeus? So what good do these things do him, when he sits weeping over a little girl? "But I'm an orator."

2.24.26 And wasn't he? Don't you see how he handles Odysseus and Phoenix, the most formidable speakers among the Greeks, how he leaves them speechless?

2.24.27 That's all I have to tell you, and even that without enthusiasm. —Why? —Because you haven't excited me.

2.24.28 For what am I to look at and be excited, the way horsemen are by well-bred horses? Your body? You shape it disgracefully. Your clothes? Those too you keep luxurious. Your bearing, your look?

2.24.29 Nothing. When you want to hear a philosopher, don't say to him, "You're not telling me anything"; just show yourself fit to listen, and you'll see how you stir the speaker.

## CHAPTER 25: HOW LOGIC IS NECESSARY

*Without logic one cannot even learn whether logic is necessary.*

2.25.1 When one of those present said, "Convince me that logic is useful," he said, "Would you like me to prove it to you?"

2.25.2 —Yes. —Then I have to present a demonstrative argument? —And when the man agreed: "How, then, will you know if I trick you with a sophism?"

2.25.3 —And when the man said nothing: "You see," he said, "how you yourself admit that these things are necessary, if without them you can't even learn this very point, whether they're necessary or not."

## CHAPTER 26: WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE OF ERROR

*Every error contains a conflict; show a rational mind its conflict and it will withdraw.*

2.26.1 Every error involves a conflict. For since the person who errs doesn't want to err but to get it right, clearly he isn't doing what he wants.

2.26.2 For what does the thief want to do? What's to his own advantage. So if stealing is to his disadvantage, he isn't doing what he wants.

2.26.3 Now every rational soul is by nature averse to conflict. As long as it doesn't realize that it's in conflict, nothing prevents it from doing conflicting things; but once it realizes, it's under strong necessity to withdraw from the conflict and flee it, just as a bitter necessity forces someone who perceives that something is false to reject it—though as long as that doesn't appear to him, he assents to it as true.

2.26.4 So the man who is skilled in argument, and at the same time good at exhorting and refuting, is the one who can show each person the conflict that makes him go wrong, and make it clear to him how he isn't doing what he wants and is doing what he doesn't want.

2.26.5 For if someone shows him that, he'll withdraw of his own accord. But as long as you don't show it, don't be surprised if he persists; for he's doing it under the impression that he's doing right.

2.26.6 That's why Socrates too, trusting in this power, used to say, "I'm not in the habit of bringing forward any other witness to what I say. I'm always content with the person I'm talking to: I call for his vote and summon him as my witness, and he, just one, is enough for me in place of all."

2.26.7 For he knew what moves a rational soul: it will tip, like a scale, whether you like it or not. Show the rational ruling center a conflict, and it will withdraw; but if you don't show it, blame yourself rather than the one who isn't persuaded.

# Book III

*Training; what is good; solitude and constancy; the true Cynic; on not being troubled by what is not up to us.*

## CHAPTER 1: ΠΕΡῚ ΚΑΛΛΩΠΙΣΜΟΥ̃

3.1.1 When a young student of rhetoric came in to see him, with his hair too elaborately done and the rest of his attire all dressed up, he said, "Tell me, don't you think some dogs are beautiful, and some horses, and so with each of the other animals?"

3.1.2 —I do, he said. —And human beings too, some beautiful, some ugly? —Of course. —Then do we call each of these beautiful in its kind on the same basis, or each in its own particular way? You'll see it like this.

3.1.3 Since we see that a dog is born for one thing, a horse for another, and, say, a nightingale for another, one could reasonably declare, in general, that each of them is beautiful when it is at its best according to its own nature; but since the nature of each is different, each of them seems to me to be beautiful in a different way. Or not?

3.1.4 —He agreed. —Then doesn't what makes a dog beautiful make a horse ugly, and what makes a horse beautiful make a dog ugly, if their natures really are different?

3.1.5 —So it seems. —And what makes a pancratiast beautiful, I think, doesn't make a wrestler good, and makes a runner utterly ridiculous; and the same man who is beautiful for the pentathlon is very ugly for wrestling? —Just so, he said.[1]

1 The pancratium was an all-in combat sport combining boxing and wrestling; its fighters were pancratiasts.

3.1.6 —What, then, makes a human being beautiful, if not the same thing that makes a dog or a horse beautiful in its kind? —That, he said. —Then what makes a dog beautiful? The presence of a dog's excellence. What makes a horse beautiful? The presence of a horse's excellence. What, then, makes a human being beautiful? Isn't it the presence of a human being's excellence?

3.1.7 So you too, young man, if you want to be beautiful, work hard at this: human excellence.

3.1.8 —And what is that? —Look at whom you yourself praise, when you praise people without partiality. The just or the unjust? —The just. —The temperate or the licentious? —The temperate. —The self-controlled or those without self-control? —The self-controlled.

3.1.9 —Then if you make yourself someone like that, you can be sure you'll make yourself beautiful; but as long as you neglect these things, you're bound to be ugly, however hard you contrive to look beautiful.

3.1.10 Beyond this I don't know how to put it to you. For if I say what I think, I'll hurt you, and you may walk out and never come back; and if I don't say it, look what I'll be doing: you come to me to be helped, and I won't help you at all; you come to me as to a philosopher, and I won't say a thing to you as a philosopher.

3.1.11 And how cruel it is, to you yourself, to leave you uncorrected! If someday later you come to your senses, you'll have good reason to reproach me:

3.1.12 "What did Epictetus see in me, that he watched me come to him like that, in such a disgraceful state, and let it go, and never said so much as a word?"

3.1.13 "Did he give up on me so completely? Wasn't I young? Wasn't I able to listen to reason? And how many other young men make plenty of mistakes like that at that age?"

3.1.14 "I hear that a certain Polemo, once the most dissolute of young men, went through a great change. All right, he didn't think I'd become a Polemo; but he could have straightened out my hair, he could have stripped off my trinkets, he could have

stopped me depilating myself—but seeing me with the look of—whom shall I say?—he said nothing."[2]

3.1.15 I don't say whose look this is. You'll say it yourself, when you come to yourself, and you'll know what it is and what sort of people cultivate it.

3.1.16 If you reproach me with this later, what will I have to say in my defense? "Yes, but I'll speak and he won't listen." Well, did Laius listen to Apollo? Didn't he go off, get drunk, and say goodbye to the oracle? So what? Did Apollo not tell him the truth for all that?[3]

3.1.17 And yet I don't know whether you'll listen to me or not; but Apollo knew perfectly well that Laius wouldn't listen, and he still spoke.

3.1.18 —Why did he speak? —And why is he Apollo? Why does he give oracles? Why has he stationed himself in this post, to be a prophet and a fountain of truth, and to have people come to him from all over the world? Why is "Know yourself" inscribed at the front, though no one understands it?[4]

3.1.19 Did Socrates persuade everyone who came to him to take care of themselves? Not one in a thousand. But still, since he had been stationed at this post by the divine sign, as he says himself, he never deserted it. And what does he say even to his judges?

3.1.20 "If you acquit me," he says, "on condition that I stop doing what I'm doing now, I won't accept it and I won't give it up. I'll go up to young and old, in short to anyone I meet, and ask the very questions I ask now, and most of all you," he says, "my fellow citizens, since you're closer kin to me."

3.1.21 Are you such a meddler, Socrates, such a busybody? What does it matter to you what we do? "What a thing to say! You're my partner and my kinsman, and you neglect yourself, and give the city a bad citizen, your kin a bad kinsman, and your neighbors a bad neighbor."

2 Polemo, a dissolute young Athenian, burst drunk into a lecture by Xenocrates and was converted to philosophy; he later headed Plato's Academy (c. 314–270 BC).
3 Apollo warned Laius, king of Thebes, not to father a son; he did so while drunk, and the son, Oedipus, killed him.
4 "Know yourself" was inscribed at Apollo's temple at Delphi.

3.1.22 "And who are you, then?" This is where it's a great thing to be able to say, "I'm the one who has to care about human beings." For it isn't just any calf that dares stand up to a lion; but if the bull comes up and stands against him, say to the bull, if you like, "And who are you?" and "What does it matter to you?"

3.1.23 Man, in every kind something exceptional is born: among cattle, among dogs, among bees, among horses. So don't say to the exceptional one, "And what are you?" Otherwise it will find a voice from somewhere and tell you, "I am like the purple in a garment. Don't expect me to be like the others, or else blame my nature for making me different from the others."

3.1.24 What then? Am I like that? How could I be? And are you the sort to hear the truth? I wish you were. But still, since I've somehow been condemned to wear a gray beard and a rough cloak, and you come to me as to a philosopher, I won't treat you cruelly or as a hopeless case. I'll say: Young man, whom do you want to make beautiful? First learn who you are, and then adorn yourself accordingly.

3.1.25 You're a human being; that is, a mortal animal able to use impressions rationally. And what does "rationally" mean? In agreement with nature, and perfectly. What, then, do you have that's exceptional? The animal? No. The mortal? No. The ability to use impressions?

3.1.26 No. What you have that's exceptional is the rational: adorn that, make that beautiful. Leave your hair to the one who shaped it as he wished.

3.1.27 Come on, what other names do you go by? Are you a man or a woman? —A man. —Then make a man beautiful, not a woman. Woman was made smooth and delicate by nature, and if she has a lot of hair, she's a freak, and they show her among the freaks in Rome.

3.1.28 In a man it's the lack of it that's freakish: if he lacks it by nature, he's a freak; but if he cuts it and plucks it out himself, what are we to do with him? Where are we to exhibit him, and what notice are we to put up? "I'll show you a man who would rather be a woman than a man."

3.1.29 What a dreadful sight! Everyone will be amazed at the notice. By Zeus, I think the pluckers themselves do what they do without realizing that this is exactly what they're doing. Man, what have you got to accuse your nature of?

3.1.30 That it made you a man? What then? Should it have made everyone a woman? And then what good would adorning yourself do you? For whom would you be adorning yourself, if everyone were a woman?

3.1.31 But you don't like the little matter. Then do a thorough job of it: remove—what's it called?—the cause of the hair. Make yourself a woman in every respect, so we won't be confused: not half man and half woman.

3.1.32 Whom do you want to please? The ladies? Please them as a man. "Yes, but they like smooth men." Why don't you go hang yourself? And if they liked men who play the passive part in sex with men, would you become one?

3.1.33 Is this your job, is this what you were born for, to give dissolute women pleasure?

3.1.34 Are we to make someone like you a citizen of Corinth, and perhaps a city warden, or supervisor of the youths, or general, or president of the games?[5]

3.1.35 Come on, and when you're married, are you going to go on plucking yourself? For whom, and to what end? And when you've had children, will you then bring them too into the citizen body plucked? A fine citizen and councilor and orator! Are these the kind of young men we should pray to have born and brought up among us?

3.1.36 By the gods, young man, don't! Once you've heard these words, go away and say to yourself, "It wasn't Epictetus who told me these things—where would he get them?—but some kindly god through him. For it would never have occurred to Epictetus to say these things; he isn't in the habit of saying them to any-

5 The young man is evidently a Corinthian; these are the offices of a Greek city: overseer of streets and buildings, supervisor of the ephebes (young men in training), general, and president of the games.

one. Come on, then, let's obey God, so as not to bring down the gods' anger on ourselves."

3.1.37 Won't you? If a raven croaks and gives you a sign, it isn't the raven that gives the sign, but God through it; and if he gives you a sign through a human voice, will you pretend it's the man telling you this, so as not to recognize the power of the divine—that it gives signs to some in one way and to others in another, but about the greatest and most important things it gives its sign through the finest messenger?

3.1.38 What else is the poet saying? "Since we ourselves warned
him beforehand,
sending Hermes, the keen-sighted slayer of Argus,
neither to kill the man himself nor court his wife."[6]

3.1.39 Hermes was to come down and tell him that; and now the gods are telling you, "sending Hermes, the messenger, the slayer of Argus," not to twist out of shape what is well as it is, and not to meddle, but to leave the man a man and the woman a woman, the beautiful person as a beautiful person and the ugly as an ugly person. Because you are not meat, or hair, but choice;

3.1.40 if you make that beautiful, then you'll be beautiful.

3.1.41 Up to now I haven't dared tell you that you're ugly; you seem to me ready to hear anything but that.

3.1.42 But look what Socrates says to Alcibiades, the most beautiful and youthful of them all: "Try, then, to be beautiful." What is he telling him? "Style your hair and pluck your legs"? Certainly not! No: "Adorn your choice, root out your bad judgments."

3.1.43 Then what about the body? Leave it as it is by nature. Someone else has seen to these things; entrust them to him.

3.1.44 —What then? Should it be dirty? —Certainly not. But clean the one you are and were born to be: a man to be clean as a man, a woman as a woman, a child as a child.

3.1.45 No—let's pluck out the lion's mane too, so he won't be dirty, and the rooster's comb, since he ought to be clean too! No:

the rooster as a rooster, the lion as a lion, and the hunting dog as a hunting dog.

## CHAPTER 2: WHAT SOMEONE MAKING PROGRESS MUST TRAIN IN, AND HOW WE NEGLECT WHAT MATTERS MOST

*Epictetus sets out the three fields of training and scolds students who skip to logic.*

3.2.1 There are three areas in which someone who is going to be fine and good must train himself: the one concerning desires and aversions, so that he may neither fail to get what he desires nor fall into what he wants to avoid;

3.2.2 the one concerning impulses and repulsions, and in short concerning duty, so that he may act in an orderly way, with good reason, and not carelessly; and the third is the one concerning freedom from deception and from rash judgment, and in general concerning assents.

3.2.3 Of these the most important and most urgent is the one concerning the passions; for a passion arises in no other way than when desire fails to get what it wants, or aversion falls into what it would avoid. This is what brings disturbances, turmoil, misfortunes and calamities; what produces griefs, laments and envies; what makes people envious and jealous—things that leave us unable even to listen to reason.

3.2.4 The second is the one concerning duty. For I shouldn't be free from passion the way a statue is, but should maintain my relationships, natural and acquired, as a pious man, as a son, as a brother, as a father, as a citizen.

3.2.5 The third is for those already making progress: it concerns the security of these very things, so that not even in sleep, or when drunk, or in a fit of depression, may any impression slip past unexamined. —That's beyond us, someone says.

3.2.6 —But the philosophers of today skip the first area and the second and busy themselves with the third: shifting arguments,

6 Zeus in the *Odyssey* (1.37–39), on the warning sent to Aegisthus not to kill Agamemnon or court his wife Clytemnestra.

arguments that conclude by questioning, hypothetical arguments, the Liar.[7]

3.2.7 —Yes, someone says, because even when you're engaged in these subjects you have to preserve your freedom from deception.

3.2.8 —Who does? The fine and good man. So is this what you lack? Have you worked through the other areas? Are you undeceivable about small change? If you see a pretty girl, do you hold out against the impression? If your neighbor comes into an inheritance, doesn't it sting? Is the only thing you lack now not being argued out of your position?

3.2.9 You poor wretch, you learn these very things trembling and anxious that someone may despise you, and asking around whether anyone is saying anything about you.

3.2.10 And if someone comes and tells you, "When there was a discussion about who is the best of the philosophers, someone there said that So-and-so is the only real philosopher," your little soul has grown from an inch high to three feet tall. But if someone else there says, "Nonsense, So-and-so isn't worth listening to. What does he know? He has the first rudiments, nothing more," you're beside yourself, you've gone pale, and at once you're shouting, "I'll show him who I am, that I'm a great philosopher!"

3.2.11 It's seen from these very things. Why do you want to show it from others? Don't you know that Diogenes pointed out one of the sophists like this, by sticking out his middle finger, and then, when the man flew into a rage, said, "That's So-and-so; I've pointed him out to you"?[8]

3.2.12 For a human being isn't pointed out with a finger, like a stone or a piece of wood; but when someone shows his judgments, then he has shown him as a human being.

3.2.13 Let's look at your judgments too. Isn't it obvious that you count your own choice as nothing, and look outside, at things outside your choice: what So-and-so will say, and what people

7 Kinds of logical argument studied by the Stoics.

8 Then as now, the extended middle finger was an obscene insult.

will think you are—a scholar, someone who has read Chrysippus or Antipater? And if Archedemus too, you've got it all!

3.2.14 Why are you still anxious that you won't show us who you are? Do you want me to tell you what kind of person you've shown us? A man who comes before us abject, discontented, quick-tempered, cowardly, blaming everything, accusing everyone, never at peace, a braggart. That's what you've shown us.

3.2.15 Go off now and read Archedemus. Then if a mouse falls and makes a noise, you're dead. For the death that awaits you is like that of—what was his name?—Crinis. He too was very proud of understanding Archedemus.[9]

3.2.16 You poor wretch, won't you let go of these things that are nothing to you? They suit people who can learn them without disturbance, who can say, "I'm not angry, I'm not grieving, I'm not envious, I'm not hindered, I'm not compelled. What's left for me? I have leisure, I'm at peace."

3.2.17 "Let's see how we should deal with arguments that shift; let's see how someone who adopts a hypothesis can avoid being led into absurdity." These things belong to them.

3.2.18 For those who have come through safely it's fitting to light a fire, to have lunch, if that's how it turns out, and to sing and dance. But when the ship is sinking, you come to me and hoist the topsails!

## CHAPTER 3: THE MATERIAL OF THE GOOD MAN, AND WHAT WE SHOULD CHIEFLY TRAIN FOR

*The good person works on his own ruling center and tests every impression against a rule.*

3.3.1 The material of the fine and good man is his own ruling center, just as the body is the material of the doctor and the trainer, and the field the material of the farmer; and the work of the fine and good man is to use impressions in accordance with nature.

3.3.2 Every soul is naturally made, just as it assents to the true, dissents from the false and suspends judgment about the uncer-

9 Crinis was a Stoic logician; the story of his death is not otherwise known.

tain, so to be moved with desire toward the good, with aversion toward the bad, and neither way toward what is neither bad nor good.

3.3.3 For just as the banker and the greengrocer aren't allowed to reject Caesar's coin, but if you show it, they have to hand over what's being sold for it, like it or not, so it is with the soul too.

3.3.4 The good, as soon as it appears, moves the soul toward itself, and the bad away from itself. A soul will never reject a clear impression of the good, any more than Caesar's coin. On this depends every movement, of both man and God.

3.3.5 That's why the good is preferred over every kind of kinship. My father is nothing to me; only the good is. "Are you so hard?" That's how I'm made by nature; this is the coin God has given me.

3.3.6 That's why, if the good is something other than the fine and the just, then father and brother and country and everything else are gone.

3.3.7 Am I to neglect my own good so that you can have it, and give way to you? In exchange for what? "I'm your father." But not a good. "I'm your brother."

3.3.8 But not a good. If, however, we place the good in right choice, then keeping up one's relationships itself becomes a good; and from then on, the man who gives up some external things is the one who gets the good.

3.3.9 "My father is taking my money." But he isn't harming you. "My brother will get the bigger share of the farm." As much as he likes. He won't get more of your self-respect, will he, or your trustworthiness, or your brotherly love?

3.3.10 For who can throw you out of this property? Not even Zeus. Nor did he wish to: he made it up to me, and gave it as he had it himself, unhindered, unconstrained, unimpeded.

3.3.11 So when different people have different coin, whoever shows that coin gets what's sold in exchange for it.

3.3.12 A thieving proconsul has come to the province. What coin does he use? Silver. Show it and carry off what you want. An adulterer has come. What coin does he use? Pretty girls. "Take

the coin," someone says, "and sell me the little item." Give, and buy.

3.3.13 Another man is keen on boys. Give him the coin and take what you want. Another loves hunting. Give him a fine horse or a puppy; groaning and moaning, he'll sell you whatever you want in exchange. For someone else compels him from within: the one who fixed this as his currency.

3.3.14 This is the kind of thing we must train ourselves in above all. As soon as you go out at dawn, examine whoever you see and whoever you hear, and answer as if to a question. What did you see? A handsome man or a beautiful woman? Apply the rule. Outside our choice or within it? Outside our choice: throw it out.

3.3.15 What did you see? Someone grieving over the death of a child? Apply the rule. Death is outside our choice: get it out of the way. Did you meet a consul? Apply the rule. What sort of thing is a consulship? Outside our choice or within it? Outside our choice: throw this out too. It isn't good currency. Get rid of it, it's nothing to you.

3.3.16 If we did this, and trained at it every day from dawn till night, something would come of it, by the gods!

3.3.17 As it is, every impression catches us gaping straight away, and only in class, if at all, do we wake up a little. Then we go out, and if we see someone grieving, we say, "He's done for"; if we see a consul, "Lucky man"; if an exile, "Poor wretch"; if a poor man, "Miserable fellow, he has nothing to eat."

3.3.18 These, then, are the bad judgments we must cut out, and this is what we must concentrate on. For what is weeping and wailing? A judgment. What is misfortune? A judgment. What are civil strife, discord, blame, accusation, impiety, foolish chatter?

3.3.19 All of them are judgments and nothing else: judgments about things outside our choice, as if they were good and bad. Let someone transfer these judgments to things within his choice, and I guarantee he'll have steadiness, whatever his circumstances.

3.3.20 The soul is like a bowl of water, and impressions are like the ray of light that falls on the water.

3.3.21 So when the water is stirred, the ray seems to move too, but it doesn't really move.

3.3.22 So too when someone has a dizzy spell, it isn't the arts and the excellences that are thrown into confusion. It is the vital breath they reside in, and when that settles, they settle too.

## CHAPTER 4: TO A MAN WHO CHEERED IN THE THEATER IN AN UNSEEMLY WAY

*A procurator jeered for rowdy cheering is told that officials set the example for the crowd.*

3.4.1 The procurator of Epirus had cheered for a comic actor in a rather unseemly way and had been abused in public for it. When he then came and told Epictetus that he had been abused, and was indignant with those who had abused him, Epictetus said, "And what harm were they doing? They were cheering just as you were."[10]

3.4.2 When the man said, "Is that the way anyone cheers, then?" Epictetus replied: They saw you, their own governor, Caesar's friend and procurator, cheering like that. Weren't they bound to cheer like that themselves?

3.4.3 If one shouldn't cheer like that, don't you do it either. And if one should, why are you angry that they imitated you? Whom do the many have to imitate but you, their superiors? Whom should they look to when they come into the theaters but you?

3.4.4 "Look how Caesar's procurator watches the show. He's shouting, so I'll shout too. He's jumping up, so I'll jump up too. His slaves are sitting all over the place shouting. I don't have slaves, so I'll shout as loud as I can in place of all of them."

3.4.5 So you must realize, when you enter the theater, that you enter as a standard and an example to the others of how they should watch.

3.4.6 Why did they abuse you, then? Because every human being hates whatever stands in his way. They wanted so-and-so

10 The procurator was the emperor's agent in a province. Epirus was the province in which Epictetus' school at Nicopolis lay.

to be crowned, you wanted someone else. They were in your way and you were in theirs. You turned out to be the stronger, and they did what they could: they abused what stood in their way.

3.4.7 So what do you want? That you should do what you want, and they shouldn't even say what they want? And what's surprising about it? Don't farmers abuse Zeus when he stands in their way? Don't sailors abuse him? Do people ever stop abusing Caesar?

3.4.8 Well then? Doesn't Zeus know? Isn't Caesar told what's said? So what does he do? He knows that if he punishes everyone who abuses him, he'll have no one left to rule.

3.4.9 What then? When you entered the theater, should you have said, "Come on, let Sophron be crowned"? No, you should have said, "Come on, let me keep my choice in accord with nature in this matter."

3.4.10 No one is dearer to me than myself. So it's absurd for me to be harmed so that someone else can win as a comic actor.

3.4.11 —Whom should I want to win, then? —Whoever wins. That way the one you want will always win. —But I want Sophron to be crowned. —Hold as many contests as you like at home, and proclaim him victor at the Nemean, Pythian, Isthmian and Olympic Games. But in public don't grab more than your share, and don't snatch for yourself what belongs to everyone. Otherwise, put up with being abused;

3.4.12 for when you do the same as the many, you put yourself on their level.

## CHAPTER 5: TO THOSE WHO LEAVE BECAUSE OF ILLNESS

*A student who wants to leave when ill is asked what he wants death to find him doing.*

3.5.1 "I'm ill here," someone says, "and I want to go home."

3.5.2 —Were you free of illness at home, then? Don't you ask whether you're doing anything here that bears on your own

choice, so that it may be set right? If you're achieving nothing, there was no point in your coming at all.

3.5.3 Go away and look after things at home. If your ruling center can't be brought into accord with nature, your bit of land at least can be. You'll increase your bit of cash, you'll look after your father in his old age, you'll hang about the marketplace, you'll hold office. A bad man, you'll do badly whatever comes next.

3.5.4 But suppose you're aware that you're casting off some bad judgments and taking up others in their place. Suppose you've moved your stance from things outside your choice to things within it, and if you ever say "Alas!" you don't say it for your father or your brother, but "for myself." Then do you still take illness into account?

3.5.5 Don't you know that illness and death have to catch us doing something? They catch the farmer farming and the sailor at sea.

3.5.6 What do you want to be doing when you're caught? You have to be caught doing something. If you have anything better than this to be doing when you're caught, do that.

3.5.7 As for me, may I be caught taking care of nothing but my own choice, so that it may be free from passion, unhindered, unconstrained, free.

3.5.8 This is what I want to be found practicing, so that I can say to God: "Did I ever transgress your commands? Did I ever use the resources you gave me for other ends? Did I use my senses wrongly, or my preconceptions? Did I ever find fault with you?"

3.5.9 "Did I ever blame the way you govern? I fell ill when you wished it. So do others, but I did so willingly. I became poor at your wish, but I was glad of it. I held no office, because you didn't wish it, and I never desired office. Did you ever see me gloomier on that account? Did I ever come before you without a cheerful face, ready for whatever you command, whatever you signal?"

3.5.10 "Now you want me to leave the festival. I'm going, and I'm entirely grateful to you for thinking me worthy to share the fest-

ival with you, to see your works and to follow your governance [with you]."

3.5.11 May death catch me thinking these thoughts, writing these things, reading these things.

3.5.12 But my mother won't hold my head when I'm ill. —Then go off to your mother. You deserve to be ill with someone holding your head.

3.5.13 —But at home I used to lie on a nice little couch. —Go back to your little couch. You deserve to lie on one like that even when you're healthy. So don't miss out on what you can do there.

3.5.14 But what does Socrates say? "Just as one man enjoys improving his own farm," he says, "and another his horse, so I enjoy watching myself become better every day."

3.5.15 —Better at what? Little turns of phrase? —Man, watch your tongue. —Little theories, then? —What are you doing? —

3.5.16 And yet I don't see what else philosophers busy themselves with. —Does it seem nothing to you never to accuse anyone, neither god nor man? Never to blame anyone? Always to carry the same face out of the house and back in?

3.5.17 These were the things Socrates knew, and yet he never said that he knew anything or taught anything. If anyone asked for little turns of phrase or little theories, he would take them off to Protagoras or to Hippias. Just so, if someone had come looking for vegetables, he'd have taken him to the gardener. Which of you, then, has this aim?[11]

3.5.18 For if you had it, you'd be glad to be ill, and to go hungry, and to die.

3.5.19 If any of you has been in love with a pretty girl, he knows I'm telling the truth.

11 Protagoras and Hippias were famous sophists, paid teachers of the fifth century BC.

## CHAPTER 6: MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

*Short remarks on progress, the unbeatable good man, common sense, and testing talented students.*

3.6.1 When someone asked how it was that more work was now devoted to reason, and yet there had been greater progress in earlier times,

3.6.2 he said, "In what respect has more work been devoted to it, and in what respect was there greater progress then? In whatever respect it is worked at now, in that respect progress will also be found now."

3.6.3 Now the work goes into analyzing syllogisms, and progress is made there. Then the work went into keeping the ruling center in accord with nature, and there was progress in that.

3.6.4 So don't mix them up, and don't expect to make progress in one thing when you're working at another. Instead, see whether any of us who is devoted to being and living in accord with nature fails to make progress. You won't find a single one.

3.6.5 The good man is unbeatable, for he doesn't compete where he isn't the stronger, only where he is.

3.6.6 "If you want my farm, take it. Take my servants, take my office, take my poor body. But you won't make my desire fail to get what it wants, or my aversion fall into what it avoids."

3.6.7 The only contest he enters is the one about things within his choice. How, then, can he not be unbeatable?

3.6.8 When someone asked what common sense is, he said, "There is what might be called a common hearing, which only distinguishes sounds, while the hearing that distinguishes musical notes is no longer common but expert. In the same way, there are some things that people who aren't completely perverted see by virtue of the faculties we all share. That condition is called common sense."

3.6.9 It isn't easy to win over young men who are soft, any more than you can catch soft cheese on a hook. But those with good

natural ability cling all the more to reason, even if you try to turn them away.

3.6.10 That's why Rufus often tried to dissuade people, using this as a test of who had natural ability and who didn't. He used to say, "A stone, even if you throw it upward, will fall down to earth by its own constitution. Just so with the naturally gifted man: the more one pushes him away, the more he inclines toward what he is made by nature for."

## CHAPTER 7: TO THE INSPECTOR OF THE FREE CITIES, AN EPICUREAN

*Epictetus argues with an Epicurean inspector that pleasure cannot be the good and would ruin a city.*

3.7.1 When the inspector, who was an Epicurean, came to see him, he said, "It's right for us laymen to find out from you philosophers what is the best thing in the world. Visitors to a foreign city do the same with the citizens who know it, so that, once we have found out, we too may go looking for it and view it, as they do the sights in cities."[12]

3.7.2 Hardly anyone denies that there are three things belonging to a human being: soul, body and externals. It remains for you people to answer which of them is the best. What shall we tell people?

3.7.3 The flesh? And was it for the flesh that Maximus sailed all the way to Cassiope in winter to see his son off, so as to have pleasure in the flesh?[13]

3.7.4 When he denied it and said, "Heaven forbid!" —Isn't it right to be devoted to the best thing? —Most right of all. —So what do we have that's better than the flesh? —The soul, he said. —And are the goods of the best thing better than those of the inferior?

12 The inspector (Greek *diorthōtēs*, Latin *corrector*) was a Roman official sent to put in order the affairs of the free cities of Greece.

13 Maximus is apparently the inspector himself. Cassiope was a harbor town on Corcyra (Corfu).

3.7.5 —Those of the best. —And are the goods of the soul within our choice or outside it? —Within our choice. —So is the soul's pleasure within our choice?

3.7.6 —He said it was. —And what does it arise from? From itself? That's inconceivable. There must first exist some substance of the good, primary and underlying, and when we attain it we shall have pleasure in the soul. —He agreed to this too. —Then what shall we take this pleasure of the soul in?

3.7.7 If it's in the goods of the soul, the substance of the good has been found. For it can't be that one thing is good and another thing is what we are rightly elated at. Nor, if the primary thing isn't good, can its by-product be good. For the by-product to be reasonable, the primary thing must be good.

3.7.8 But if you have any sense, you people won't say so, for what you'd be saying would be inconsistent with Epicurus and with the rest of your judgments.

3.7.9 What remains is that the pleasure in the soul is taken in bodily things. Then those become, once again, the primary thing and the substance of the good.

3.7.10 That's why Maximus acted foolishly if he sailed for any reason other than the flesh, that is, for the best thing.

3.7.11 And a man acts foolishly, too, if he keeps his hands off other people's property when he's a judge and could take it. But if you like, let's consider only this: how it can be done secretly, safely, without anyone knowing.

3.7.12 For not even Epicurus himself declares that stealing is bad, only getting caught. And it's because you can't be confident of escaping notice that he says, "Don't steal."

3.7.13 But "I tell you, if it's done cleverly and discreetly, we won't be found out." And then, "We have powerful friends in Rome, men and women," and, "The Greeks are feeble; no one will dare go up to Rome over this."

3.7.14 Why hold back from your own good? This is senseless, it's stupid. But even if you tell me that you do hold back, I won't believe you.

3.7.15 For just as it's impossible to assent to what appears false or to turn away from what appears true, so it's impossible to stand aside from what appears good. And wealth is a good, and just about the most productive source of pleasures there is.

3.7.16 Why not acquire it? And why shouldn't we seduce our neighbor's wife, if we can do it without being noticed? And if the husband makes a fuss, why not break his neck into the bargain?

3.7.17 That's if you want to be a philosopher of the proper sort, a complete one, consistent with your judgments. Otherwise you'll be no different from us so-called Stoics, for we too say one thing and do another.

3.7.18 We say what's fine and do what's shameful. You'll be perverse in the opposite way, holding shameful judgments and doing fine things.

3.7.19 For God's sake, can you imagine a city of Epicureans? "I'm not marrying." "Nor am I, for one shouldn't marry." Nor have children, nor take part in public life. So what will happen? Where will the citizens come from? Who will educate them? Who will supervise the young men, who will run the gymnasium? And what will he teach them? What the Spartans were taught, or the Athenians?

3.7.20 Take me a young man and bring him up according to your judgments. The judgments are wicked. They subvert the city, they ruin households, they aren't even fit for women. Drop them, man.

3.7.21 You live in an imperial city. You must hold office, judge justly, keep your hands off other people's property. No woman must look beautiful to you but your own wife, no boy beautiful, no silver plate beautiful, no gold plate.

3.7.22 Look for judgments consistent with these. Starting from them, you'll gladly keep away from things that are so persuasive at leading us on and overpowering us.

3.7.23 But if, on top of their persuasiveness, we've gone and invented a philosophy like this one, which helps push us toward them and strengthens us in it, what will happen?

3.7.24 In a piece of embossed silverwork, what is best, the silver or the craftsmanship? The substance of the hand is flesh, but what is primary is the work the hand does.

3.7.25 So duties, too, are of three kinds: some concern existing, some existing in a certain way, and some are the primary things themselves. So in a human being, too, we mustn't value the material, the poor flesh, but what is primary.

3.7.26 What are these things? Taking part in public life, marrying, having children, revering God, caring for one's parents. In general: desiring, having aversion, having impulse and repulsion, each of them as it ought to be done, as we are by nature made to do. And how are we made by nature?

3.7.27 As free, as noble, as having self-respect. What other animal blushes? What other animal gets an impression of what is shameful?

3.7.28 Subordinate pleasure to these as an attendant, a servant, to call forth our eagerness and to keep us steady in the works that accord with nature.

3.7.29 But I'm rich and I need nothing. —Then why do you still pretend to be a philosopher? Your gold and silver plate are enough. What do you need judgments for?

3.7.30 —But I'm also a judge of the Greeks. —Do you know how to judge? What made you know? —Caesar wrote me a letter of appointment. —Let him write you one to judge music too. What good will it do you?

3.7.31 Still, how did you become a judge? Whose hand did you kiss, Symphorus' or Numenius'? Outside whose bedroom did you sleep? To whom did you send gifts? And then don't you realize that being a judge is worth exactly as much as Numenius? — But I can throw anyone I like into prison.[14]

3.7.32 —As you might a stone. —But I can have anyone I like beaten with a club. —As you might a donkey. That isn't ruling over human beings.

14 Symphorus and Numenius were presumably influential freedmen at the imperial court.

3.7.33 Rule us as rational beings. Show us what is to our advantage, and we'll follow. Show us what is to our disadvantage, and we'll turn away from it.

3.7.34 Make us want to be like you, as Socrates made people want to be like him. He was the one who ruled people as human beings, who had brought them to subordinate to him their desire, their aversion, their impulse, their repulsion.

3.7.35 "Do this, don't do that, or I'll throw you into prison." That is no longer rule over rational beings.

3.7.36 Instead: "Do this, as Zeus has ordained. If you don't, you'll be penalized, you'll be harmed." What harm? No other than not doing what you ought. You'll destroy the trustworthy man in you, the self-respecting man, the orderly man. Don't look for other harms greater than these.

## CHAPTER 8: HOW TO TRAIN OURSELVES AGAINST IMPRESSIONS

*We should question impressions daily, labeling each event as within or outside our choice.*

3.8.1 Just as we train ourselves to deal with sophistical questions, so we ought to train ourselves every day to deal with impressions, for they too put questions to us.

3.8.2 So-and-so's son has died. Answer: "Outside our choice, not bad." His father has left so-and-so disinherited. What do you think? "Outside our choice, not bad." Caesar has condemned him.

3.8.3 "Outside our choice, not bad." He was distressed at this. "Within our choice, bad." He bore it nobly. "Within our choice, good."

3.8.4 If we get into this habit, we'll make progress, for we'll never assent to anything except what we get a cognitive impression of.[15]

3.8.5 His son has died. What happened? His son has died. Nothing else? Nothing. His ship was lost. What happened? His ship

was lost. He was led off to prison. What has happened? He was led off to prison. But the idea that "he has fared badly"

3.8.6 is something each person adds from himself. "But Zeus is wrong to do these things." Why? Because he made you capable of endurance? Because he made you great-souled? Because he took away their being bad? Because you can be happy while suffering them? Because he opened the door for you when they don't suit you? Man, walk out, and don't complain.

3.8.7 If you want to know how the Romans regard philosophers, listen. Italicus, who has the greatest reputation among them as a philosopher, once got angry with his own people when I was there. He behaved as though he were suffering something unbearable, and said, "I can't bear it. You're killing me. You'll make me turn out like him," and pointed at me.

## CHAPTER 9: TO AN ORATOR GOING UP TO ROME FOR A LAWSUIT

*A man traveling to Rome for an honor is told that everything depends on his judgments.*

3.9.1 Someone came to see him who was going up to Rome for a lawsuit concerning an honor of his. He asked the reason for his journey, and when the man in turn asked him what he thought of the matter,

3.9.2 he said, "If you're asking me what you'll achieve in Rome, whether you'll succeed or fail, I have no theory for that. But if you're asking how you'll get on, I can tell you this: if you have right judgments, well; if bad ones, badly. For in every case, what causes a person to do something is a judgment."

3.9.3 What made you want to be elected patron of Cnossus? Your judgment. What makes you go up to Rome now? Your judgment. And in winter, with danger and expense? —Yes, I have to. —Who tells you that?[16]

15 In Stoic theory, a "cognitive" impression is one so clear and distinct that it can only come from what is really there.

16 Cnossus was a leading city of Crete. Its patron would represent its interests, here evidently at Rome.

3.9.4 Your judgment. So if judgments are the causes of everything, and someone has bad judgments, then the result will be like the cause.

3.9.5 Well, do we all have sound judgments, you and your opponent too? Then how is it you disagree? Or is it you rather than he who has them? Why? Because it seems so to you. It seems so to him too, and to madmen. That's a poor criterion.

3.9.6 Show me instead that you've given some examination and some attention to your judgments. You are sailing to Rome now to become patron of Cnossus; it isn't enough for you to stay at home with the honors you had, but you desire something greater and more conspicuous. When did you ever sail like that in order to examine your own judgments, and to throw out any bad one you have?

3.9.7 Whom have you gone to for this purpose? What time did you set yourself for it, at what age? Go over the periods of your life by yourself, if you're ashamed to do it in front of me.

3.9.8 When you were a boy, did you examine your judgments? Didn't you do what you did the way you do everything now? And when you were a youth, listening to the orators and practicing declamation yourself, what did you imagine you lacked?

3.9.9 And when you were a young man, already in public life, pleading cases yourself and making a name for yourself, who still seemed your equal? When would you have put up with being examined by someone and told that your judgments were bad?

3.9.10 So what do you want me to tell you? —Help me with this business. —I have no theories for that. And if that's why you've come to me, you haven't come to me as to a philosopher, but as to a greengrocer, or a cobbler.

3.9.11 —Then what do philosophers have theories for? —For this: that whatever happens, our ruling center should be and remain in accord with nature. Does that seem a small thing to you? —No, the greatest. —Well then? Does it need only a little time, and can you pick it up in passing? If you can, pick it up.

3.9.12 Then you'll say, "I met Epictetus, as I might a stone or a statue." Yes, because you saw me, and nothing more. The one who meets a human being as a human being is the one who learns his judgments and shows his own in turn.

3.9.13 Learn my judgments, show me yours, and then say you've met me. Let's test each other. If I have some bad judgment, take it away. If you have one, bring it out into the open. That is what meeting a philosopher means.

3.9.14 No; instead it's: "We're passing through, and while we're hiring the ship we can see Epictetus too. Let's see what on earth he has to say." Then, when you leave: "Epictetus was nothing. His grammar was bad, his Greek was barbarous." What else do you people come in to judge?

3.9.15 "But if I devote myself to these things," he says, "I won't have a farm, just as you don't; I won't have silver cups, just as you don't, or fine cattle, just as you don't."

3.9.16 To this it may be enough to reply: "But I don't need them. While you, even if you acquire a lot, need other things. Like it or not, you're poorer than I am."

3.9.17 —Then what do I need? —What you don't have: steadiness, a mind in accord with nature, not being disturbed.

3.9.18 Patron or no patron, what do I care? You care. I'm richer than you. I'm not anxious about what Caesar will think of me, and I flatter no one for that purpose. This is what I have in place of silver plate, in place of gold plate. Your vessels are gold, but your reason is made of clay: your judgments, your assents, your impulses, your desires.

3.9.19 And when I have these in accord with nature, why shouldn't I take some pains over my reasoning too? I have the leisure; my mind isn't distracted. What shall I do, since I'm not distracted? What is there more human that I could do than this?

3.9.20 When you people have nothing to do, you get upset, and you go to the theater or wander about. Why shouldn't the philosopher work out his own reasoning?

3.9.21 You have crystal ware, I have the Liar argument. You have murrhine ware, I have the Denier. Everything you have seems

small to you; everything of mine seems great to me. Your desire can't be satisfied; mine has been satisfied.[17]

3.9.22 This is what happens to children who put their hand into a narrow-necked jar and try to pull out figs and nuts: if a child fills his hand, he can't get it out, and then he cries. Let go of a few and you'll get your hand out. You too: let go of your desire. Don't desire many things, and you'll get what you want.

## CHAPTER 10: HOW TO BEAR ILLNESS

*A fever is part of life, and the time to show what philosophy has taught.*

3.10.1 When the need for each judgment arises, you must have it ready to hand: at breakfast the ones about breakfast, in the bath the ones about the bath, in bed the ones about bed.

3.10.2 Let not sleep come to your tender eyes / before you have reckoned up each of the day's deeds:[18]

3.10.3 Where did I go wrong? What did I do? What duty have I left undone?
Begin with this and go through them all; and then,
for what you did badly, reproach yourself; for what you did well, rejoice.

3.10.4 And we must keep these verses for use, not so as to recite them aloud like "Paean Apollo!" Again, in a fever, have ready the judgments that bear on it:

3.10.5 not to give up everything and forget it all if we get a fever. "If I ever philosophize again, let whatever happen, happen! I must go away somewhere and look after my poor body"

3.10.6 —as if fever won't come there too! And what is philosophizing? Isn't it preparing oneself for what happens? Don't you realize, then, that what you're saying amounts to this: "If I ever again prepare myself to bear calmly what happens, let whatever

17 The Denier was another logical puzzle. Murrhine ware was made from a costly stone and prized for luxury cups.

18 These lines come from the *Golden Verses*, a collection of moral maxims ascribed to Pythagoras.

happen, happen"? It's as if someone took some blows and gave up the pancratium.

3.10.7 But there, you can quit and not be beaten. Here, if we quit philosophizing, what good is it? So what should a man say to himself in each hardship? "This is what I was training for, this is what I was practicing for."

3.10.8 God says to you, "Show me proof: did you compete according to the rules, did you eat what you should, did you train, did you listen to your trainer?" And then, at the very moment for action, do you go soft? Now is the time for fever: let it be done well. The time for thirst: thirst well. The time for hunger: hunger well.

3.10.9 Isn't it up to you? Who will stop you? The doctor will stop you drinking, but he can't stop you thirsting well. He'll stop you eating, but he can't stop you hungering well.

3.10.10 But am I not a student? —And why are you a student? Slave! Isn't it so that you may enjoy the smooth flow of life? So that you may have steadiness? So that you may be and remain in accord with nature?

3.10.11 What prevents you from keeping your ruling center in accord with nature while you have a fever? This is where the matter is tested, where the philosopher is put on trial. For this too is part of life. Like a walk, like a voyage, like a journey, so too a fever.

3.10.12 You don't read while you're walking, do you? —No. —Nor do you while you have a fever. But if you walk well, you have what belongs to someone walking; if you have your fever well, you have what belongs to someone with a fever.

3.10.13 What is having a fever well? Not blaming God or man, not being crushed by what happens, welcoming death well and nobly, doing what you're told. When the doctor comes in, not being afraid of what he'll say, and not being overjoyed if he says, "You're doing nicely." For what good has he told you? When you were healthy, what good was that to you?

3.10.14 Nor being disheartened if he says, "You're doing badly." For what is doing badly? Coming close to the soul's separation

from the body. So what's terrible about that? If you don't come close to it now, won't you come close to it later? Is the world going to be turned upside down when you die?

3.10.15 So why flatter the doctor? Why say, "If you wish it, sir, I'll get well"? Why give him occasion to raise his eyebrows at you? Why not give him his due? As you would a cobbler for your foot, or a carpenter for your house, so give the doctor his due for your poor body, which isn't mine, which is by nature a corpse. This is what the time of fever calls for. If the patient fulfills it, he has what belongs to him.

3.10.16 For it isn't the philosopher's job to protect these external things, his bit of wine, his bit of oil, his poor body. Then what? His own ruling center. And external things, how far? Just so far as not to behave thoughtlessly with regard to them.

3.10.17 Where, then, is there still room for fear? Where is there still room for anger? Where for fear about things that are someone else's, things worth nothing?

3.10.18 For these are the two things we must have ready to hand: that outside our choice there is nothing either good or bad, and that we mustn't try to lead events, but follow them.

3.10.19 "My brother shouldn't have treated me like that." No, but that's for him to see to. As for me, however he treats me, I'll behave toward him as I should.

3.10.20 For this is mine, and that is someone else's. This no one can prevent; that can be prevented.

## CHAPTER 11: MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

*The punishments for disobeying God, and Zeus as guardian of strangers, fathers and kin.*

3.11.1 There are certain punishments laid down, as if by law, for those who disobey the divine governance:

3.11.2 "Whoever thinks anything good other than what lies within his choice, let him envy, crave, flatter, be disturbed. Whoever thinks anything else bad, let him grieve, mourn, lament, be unhappy."

3.11.3 And yet, though we're so harshly punished, we can't give it up.

3.11.4 Remember what the poet says about the stranger: Stranger,
it isn't right for me, even if a worse man than you should come,
to dishonor a stranger; for all come from Zeus,
strangers and beggars alike.[19]

3.11.5 Have this ready in the case of a father too: it isn't right for me, even if a worse man than you should come, to dishonor a father; for all come from Zeus, god of fathers.

3.11.6 And in the case of a brother: for all come from Zeus, god of kin. And so in our other relationships too we'll find Zeus watching over them.

## CHAPTER 12: ON TRAINING

*Real training targets our own desires, impulses and assents, not showy feats of endurance.*

3.12.1 We shouldn't do our training by means of things that are unnatural and bizarre. Otherwise we who claim to be philosophers will be no different from street performers.

3.12.2 Walking on a tightrope is difficult too, and not only difficult but dangerous. Should we practice tightrope-walking for that reason, or setting up a palm tree, or hugging statues?[20]

3.12.3 Not at all. Not everything difficult and dangerous is suitable for training, only what helps with the task we have set out to accomplish.

3.12.4 And what is the task we have set out to accomplish? To live with desire and aversion unhindered. And what does that mean? Neither to fail to get what we desire, nor to fall into what we avoid. That, then, is what our training should aim at.

3.12.5 It's impossible to have a desire that never fails and an aversion that never falls into what it avoids without great and

19 Homer, *Odyssey* 14.56–58: the swineherd Eumaeus welcoming the disguised Odysseus.

continuous training. So know that if you let it turn outward, toward things outside our choice, your desire won't succeed and your aversion won't avoid what it wants to avoid.

3.12.6 And since a strong habit has got in first, and we're used to directing desire and aversion only toward these things, we must set a contrary habit against this habit. Where impressions make us slip most, there we must set up our training against them.

3.12.7 I'm inclined toward pleasure: I'll swing over to the opposite side, beyond due measure, for the sake of training. I'm averse to hard work: I'll rub down and exercise my impressions for this, so that my aversion withdraws from everything of that sort.

3.12.8 For who is in training? The man who practices not using desire, and using aversion only for things within his choice, and practices more on things that are hard to master. That's why different people must train more for different things.

3.12.9 So what good does it do here to set up a palm tree, or to carry around a leather tent and a mortar and pestle?

3.12.10 Man, if you're hot-tempered, train yourself to put up with abuse and not to be upset when you're insulted. Then you'll progress so far that even if someone hits you, you'll say to yourself, "Pretend you've hugged a statue."

3.12.11 Next, use wine with refinement. Not so as to drink a lot (there are wrong-headed trainees who practice that too), but first so as to abstain from it. And abstain from girls, and from little cakes. Then one day, as a test, if at all, at a suitable time, you'll enter the lists yourself to find out whether your impressions get the better of you as they used to.

3.12.12 But at first, flee far from what is stronger than you. A pretty girl against a young man just starting philosophy is an unequal fight. The pot and the rock, as they say, don't get along.

3.12.13 After desire and aversion, the second area is that of impulse and repulsion: that it should be obedient to reason, not

20 Diogenes the Cynic is said to have hugged bronze statues in winter to harden himself; "setting up a palm tree" was apparently a feat of balancing a pole.

out of season, not out of place, not out of any other such due proportion.

3.12.14 The third is the area of assent, concerned with what is plausible and attractive.

3.12.15 Socrates said we shouldn't live an unexamined life; just so, we shouldn't accept an unexamined impression. We should say, "Wait, let me see who you are and where you come from," as the night watchmen say, "Show me the password." "Do you have the token from nature that an impression must have if it is to be accepted?"

3.12.16 As for the rest, whatever is applied to the body by those who exercise it: if it somehow tends toward desire and aversion, it too may count as training. But if it is for display, it belongs to someone who has turned outward, who is hunting for something else and looking for spectators to say, "What a great man!"

3.12.17 That's why Apollonius put it well: "When you want to train for your own sake, some day when you're thirsty in the heat, take a mouthful of cold water, spit it out, and tell no one."

## CHAPTER 13: WHAT LONELINESS IS, AND WHO IS LONELY

*Being alone differs from being helpless; like Zeus, we should learn to keep our own company.*

3.13.1 Loneliness is the condition of someone who has no help. A man isn't lonely just because he is alone, any more than a man in a crowd is necessarily not lonely.

3.13.2 At any rate, when we lose a brother or a son or a friend we used to rely on, we say we've been left lonely, often while we're in Rome, with such a crowd meeting us and so many people living with us, and sometimes with a host of slaves.

3.13.3 For according to its concept, a lonely man means someone helpless and exposed to those who want to harm him. That's why, when we're traveling, we call ourselves lonely above all when we fall among robbers. It isn't the sight of a human being that frees us from loneliness, but the sight of one who is trustworthy, self-respecting and helpful.

3.13.4 For if being alone is enough to make one lonely, you'd have to say that Zeus too is lonely at the conflagration and bewails his lot: "Poor me, I have neither Hera nor Athena nor Apollo, nor any brother at all, or son, or grandson, or kinsman."[21]

3.13.5 Some people do say that this is what he does when he's alone at the conflagration. For they can't conceive how one lives alone, because they start from something natural: that we are by nature sociable, fond of one another, and glad to spend time with other people.

3.13.6 But nonetheless one should also be prepared for this: to be able to be sufficient to oneself, to be able to keep one's own company;

3.13.7 just as Zeus keeps his own company, and is at rest by himself, and considers what his governance is like, and occupies himself with thoughts befitting himself, so we too should be able to talk to ourselves, not need others, not be at a loss for how to spend our time;

3.13.8 to attend to the divine governance, and to our own relation to everything else; to look at how we used to respond to what happens, and how we do now; what things still oppress us; how these too might be cured, how removed; and if any of them need finishing off, to finish them off according to the principle that applies to them.

3.13.9 You see that Caesar seems to provide us with a great peace. There are no longer wars or battles, no brigandage or piracy on a large scale; one can travel at any season and sail from east to west.

3.13.10 But can he give us peace from fever too? From shipwreck? From fire, or earthquake, or lightning? Come, from love? He can't. From grief? He can't. From envy? He can't. In short, from none of these;

3.13.11 but the reasoning of the philosophers promises to give us peace from these too. And what does it say? "If you pay attention

21 The Stoics taught that the world periodically dissolves into fire (the "conflagration"), leaving Zeus alone until it is formed again.

to me, people, wherever you are and whatever you're doing, you won't be distressed, you won't be angry, you won't be compelled, you won't be hindered. You'll live free from passion and free from everything."

3.13.12 When someone has this peace, [not] proclaimed not by Caesar (for how could he proclaim it?) but by God through reason, isn't he content, when he's alone, to look about and reflect:

3.13.13 "Now nothing bad can happen to me. For me there are no robbers, for me there are no earthquakes; everything is full of peace, full of tranquility. Every road, every city, every fellow traveler, neighbor and companion is harmless. Someone else, whose concern it is, provides food; someone else, clothing; someone else has given me senses, and preconceptions."

3.13.14 "And when he doesn't provide the necessities, he sounds the retreat, he has opened the door and says to you, 'Come.' Where? To nothing terrible, but to where you came from, to what is friendly and akin to you, to the elements."

3.13.15 "Whatever fire there was in you will go back to fire; whatever earth, to earth; whatever breath, to breath; whatever water, to water. There is no Hades, no Acheron, no Cocytus, no Pyriphlegethon; everything is full of gods and spirits"?

3.13.16 Someone who can reflect on these things, and who sees the sun and moon and stars and enjoys land and sea, is no more lonely than he is helpless.

3.13.17 "What then? Suppose someone attacks me when I'm alone and murders me?" Fool, not you, only your poor body.

3.13.18 So what loneliness is there any more, what helplessness? Why make ourselves worse than little children? When they're left alone, what do they do? They pick up bits of pottery and ashes and build something, then knock it down and build something else; and so they're never at a loss for how to pass the time.

3.13.19 So if you all set sail, am I going to sit and cry because I've been left alone and lonely like this? Won't I have bits of pottery,

won't I have ashes? Do children do this out of foolishness, while we are made unhappy by our understanding?

3.13.20 Every great power is dangerous for a beginner. So one must bear such things according to one's ability, but in accord with nature.

3.13.21 but not for a consumptive. Practice sometimes living like a sick man, so that some day you may live like a healthy one. Fast, drink only water. Abstain entirely from desire for a while, so that some day you may desire reasonably too. And if reasonably, then when you have some good in yourself, you'll desire well.

3.13.22 No; we want to live like wise men straight away, and to help people. What help? What are you doing? Have you helped yourself? But you want to exhort them. Have you been exhorted yourself? You want to help them.

3.13.23 Show them in your own person what kind of people philosophy makes, and stop babbling. When you eat, help those eating with you; when you drink, help those drinking with you. By giving way to everyone, yielding, putting up with them: help them that way, and don't spew your bile all over them.

## CHAPTER 14: MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

*Remarks on walking alone, showing off abstinence, conceit and lack of confidence.*

3.14.1 Just as bad tragic actors can't sing alone, only with many others, so some people can't walk alone.

3.14.2 Man, if you're anyone, walk alone too, and talk to yourself, and don't hide in the chorus.

3.14.3 Let yourself be mocked sometimes, look around you, be shaken up, so that you may know who you are.

3.14.4 When someone drinks only water or does something for his training, he takes every opportunity to tell everyone about it.

3.14.5 "I drink only water." Is that why you drink water, just for the sake of drinking water? Man, if it does you good to drink it, drink it. If not, you're being ridiculous.

3.14.6 But if it's good for you and you drink it, say nothing in front of those who are irritated by people like that. What's this? Is it these very people you want to please?

3.14.7 Of the things we do, some are done as primary aims, some because of circumstances, some by way of management, some out of accommodation to others, some from firmness of purpose.

3.14.8 Two things must be rooted out of people: conceit and lack of confidence. Conceit is thinking you need nothing more; lack of confidence is supposing that the smooth flow of life is impossible with so many things standing around you.

3.14.9 Conceit is rooted out by cross-examination, and this is the first thing Socrates does. As for the thing not being impossible, consider it and investigate. This investigation won't harm you;

3.14.10 and philosophizing pretty much comes down to this: investigating how one can use desire and aversion without being thwarted.

3.14.11 "I'm better than you: my father is of consular rank." Another says, "I've been a tribune, and you haven't."

3.14.12 If we were horses, would you say, "My father was faster," or "I have plenty of barley and hay," or "I have fine neck-trappings"? So what if, while you were saying this, I said, "Granted. So let's race"?

3.14.13 Come, then: is there nothing in a human being like racing in a horse, by which the worse and the better will be known? Isn't there self-respect, trustworthiness, justice?

3.14.14 Show that you're better in these, so that you may be better as a human being. If you tell me, "I kick hard," I'll tell you in turn, "You're proud of what a donkey does."

## CHAPTER 15: THAT WE SHOULD APPROACH EACH THING WITH FORETHOUGHT

*Consider what any undertaking involves, as an athlete must, before taking up philosophy.*

3.15.1 In each undertaking, consider what leads up to it and what follows from it, and only then set about it. Otherwise you'll come to it eagerly at first, since you haven't thought about any of the consequences. Then later, when difficulties appear, you'll give up in disgrace.

3.15.2 "I want to win at Olympia." Then consider what leads up to it and what follows from it. And then, if it's to your advantage, set to work.

3.15.3 You must keep to a routine, eat on a strict diet, give up pastries, train under compulsion at a fixed hour, in heat and in cold. You mustn't drink cold water, or wine whenever you feel like it. In short, you must hand yourself over to your trainer as, [you see,] to a doctor;

3.15.4 then in the contest, you must dig in, sometimes dislocate a wrist, twist an ankle, swallow a lot of sand, get flogged. And after all that, sometimes lose.

3.15.5 Reckon all this up, and if you still want to, go in for athletics. Otherwise, you know, you'll behave like children, who play athletes one moment and gladiators the next, then blow trumpets, then act out tragedies, whatever they've seen and admired.

3.15.6 That's you too: an athlete one moment, a gladiator the next, then a philosopher, then an orator, but with your whole soul nothing. Like an ape, you imitate whatever you see, and one thing after another always takes your fancy, while whatever you're used to bores you.

3.15.7 For you never approached anything after thinking it over, or after going round the whole matter and testing it, but at random and with a lukewarm desire.

3.15.8 In the same way, some people see a philosopher, or hear someone speaking the way Euphrates speaks (and yet who can speak as he does?), and want to be philosophers themselves.[22]

3.15.9 Man, first consider what the thing is, and then your own nature too, what you can carry. If you want to be a wrestler, look at your shoulders, your thighs, your loins.

3.15.10 For different people are made by nature for different things. Do you think you can be a philosopher and still do these things? Do you think you can eat as you do now, drink as you do now, get angry just as you do, and be irritable just as you are?

3.15.11 You must go without sleep, toil hard, overcome certain desires, leave your family, be despised by a slave boy, be laughed at by those you meet, come off worse in everything: in office, in honor, in the courts.

3.15.12 Think these things over carefully, and then, if you see fit, come forward, if you're willing to have in exchange for them freedom from passion, freedom and tranquility. If not, don't come near. Don't be like children: a philosopher now, later a tax collector, then an orator, then one of Caesar's procurators.

3.15.13 These things don't go together. You have to be one person, either good or bad. You have to work on either your own ruling center or on externals; put your effort into what's inside or into what's outside. That is, you have to hold the position of a philosopher or of a layman.

3.15.14 When Galba had been murdered, someone said to Rufus, "So is the world governed by providence now?" And he said, "Did I ever, even in passing, build my case that the world is governed by providence on Galba?"[23]

22 Euphrates of Tyre was a Stoic philosopher of Epictetus' time, famous for his eloquence.

23 The emperor Galba was murdered in AD 69.

## CHAPTER 16: THAT WE SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS IN SOCIAL DEALINGS

*Beginners who mix freely with laymen will be dragged down unless their principles are firm.*

3.16.1 Anyone who mixes a lot with other people, whether for conversation or at drinking parties or simply in daily life, is bound either to become like them himself or to bring them over to his own ways.

3.16.2 Put a dead coal next to a burning one, and either the first will put out the second or the second will set the first alight.

3.16.3 Since the danger is so great, we have to be careful about mixing with laymen in social dealings of this kind. Remember that it's impossible to rub up against someone covered in soot without getting some of the soot on yourself.

3.16.4 What will you do if he talks about gladiators, about horses, about athletes, or, worse still, about people: "So-and-so is bad, so-and-so is good; this was done well, that was done badly"? Or if he mocks, or clowns around, or turns spiteful?

3.16.5 Does any of you have the kind of preparation a musician has when he picks up the lyre, so that as soon as he touches the strings he knows which are out of tune and tunes the instrument? The kind of power Socrates had, so that in every social encounter he brought the people with him round to his own concerns?

3.16.6 Where would you get it from? No, you're bound to be led around by the laymen.

3.16.7 Then why are they stronger than you? Because they speak their rotten talk from their judgments, while you speak your elegant talk from your lips. That's why what you say is limp and dead, and it's sickening to listen to your exhortations and that wretched "excellence" of yours, which gets babbled about up and down. That's how the laymen beat you.

3.16.8 For judgment is strong everywhere; judgment is invincible.

3.16.9 So until those fine opinions have set firm in you, and you've acquired some power to keep you safe, I advise you to be careful about stooping to the level of laymen. Otherwise, whatever you write down in school will melt away day by day, like wax in the sun.

3.16.10 So keep well away from the sun, for as long as your opinions are made of wax.

3.16.11 That's why philosophers even advise people to leave their own countries: old habits pull us away and don't let any other habit get started, and we can't stand the people we meet who say, "Look, so-and-so is doing philosophy—him, the one who was like this and like that."

3.16.12 So too doctors send the chronically ill to another place and another climate, and they're right to do it.

3.16.13 You too, bring in other habits to replace the old ones. Make your opinions set firm; train in them.

3.16.14 But no: from here you're off to a show, to a gladiatorial fight, to the exercise ground, to the circus; then from there back here, and from here back there again—the same people as ever.

3.16.15 And no fine habit, no attention, no turning back on yourself and keeping watch: "How am I using the impressions that strike me? In accordance with nature or against it? How do I respond to them? As I should, or as I shouldn't? Do I tell myself, about things outside my choice, that they're nothing to me?"

3.16.16 For if you're not yet in that condition, flee your former habits, flee laymen, if you ever want to start being somebody.

## CHAPTER 17: ON PROVIDENCE

*Those who seem to prosper unfairly have paid for their gains with what the good man keeps.*

3.17.1 Whenever you find fault with providence, just think about it, and you'll recognize that what has happened is in accordance with reason.

3.17.2 "Yes, but the wrongdoer gets more." More of what? Of money. In that respect he's better than you, because he flatters, he's shameless, he stays up nights. What's surprising about that?

3.17.3 But look at this: does he get more than you in being trustworthy, in having self-respect? You won't find that he does. No, where you're better, there you'll find that you're the one who has more.

3.17.4 I once said to someone who was annoyed that Philostorgus was doing so well, Would you want to sleep with Sura? —"May that day never come!" he said. —[24]

3.17.5 Then why are you annoyed if he gets something in return for what he sells? Or how can you call someone blessed who gets those things by means you pray to be spared? Or what harm is providence doing if it gives the better things to the better people? Or isn't it better to have self-respect than to be rich? He agreed. Then why are you annoyed, man, when you have what's better?

3.17.6 So always remember this, and keep it at hand: it's a law of nature that the better has more than the worse in the respect in which it is better. And you'll never be annoyed.

3.17.7 "But my wife treats me badly." Fine. If anyone asks you what this is, say, "My wife treats me badly." "Nothing else, then?"

3.17.8 Nothing. "My father gives me nothing." But that it's bad—do you have to add that from inside yourself, and tack on a lie?

3.17.9 That's why it's not poverty we should throw out, but our judgment about it; and that way we'll have the smooth flow of life.

24 Philostorgus had evidently prospered as the lover of a rich and powerful man named Sura.

## CHAPTER 18: THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE DISTURBED BY NEWS

*No news can ever concern what lies within our choice, so none should disturb us.*

3.18.1 Whenever you're told some disturbing news, keep this at hand: news is never about anything within your choice.

3.18.2 Can anyone bring you news that you formed a bad opinion, or had a bad desire? —Not at all. —No, but that someone has died. So what's that to you? That someone is speaking badly of you. So what's that to you?

3.18.3 That your father is preparing this or that. Against what? Not against your choice, surely? How could he? No, against your poor body, your bit of property. You're safe: it's not against you.

3.18.4 [So then:] but the judge pronounces that you've committed impiety. Didn't the jurors pronounce the same about Socrates? Is it your job to pronounce that verdict? —No. —Then why do you still care?

3.18.5 Your father has a job of his own, and if he doesn't fulfill it, he has destroyed the father in himself, the loving, gentle father. Don't look for him to lose anything else on this account. For no one ever goes wrong in one thing and is harmed in another.

3.18.6 Again, your job is to make your defense steadily, with self-respect, without anger. Otherwise you too have destroyed the son in yourself, the self-respecting, noble son.

3.18.7 What then? Is the judge in no danger? No: he runs just as much risk. So why are you still afraid of what he'll decide? What have you to do with someone else's evil?

3.18.8 Your evil is making a bad defense: guard against that alone. Being condemned or not being condemned is someone else's job, and just so, it's someone else's evil.

3.18.9 "So-and-so is threatening you." Me? No. "He's finding fault with you." He'll see to how he's doing his own job. "He's going to condemn you unjustly." Poor wretch.

## CHAPTER 19: THE POSITION OF THE LAYMAN AND OF THE PHILOSOPHER

*The layman blames others for his troubles; the philosopher blames only himself.*

3.19.1 The first difference between a layman and a philosopher: the one says, "Woe is me because of my child, because of my brother; woe because of my father," while the other, if he's ever forced to say "woe is me,"

3.19.2 stops to think and says, "because of me." For nothing outside our choice can hinder or harm our choice; only choice can do that to itself.

3.19.3 So if we too lean that way, so that when things go badly we blame ourselves, and remember that nothing but judgment is the cause of disturbance or instability, I swear to you by all the gods, we've made progress.

3.19.4 As it is, we've taken a different road from the start. Right from when we were still children, whenever we stumbled while gaping about, our nurse didn't scold us; she beat the stone. Why, what did the stone do? Was it supposed to move out of the way because of your child's foolishness?

3.19.5 Again, if we don't find anything to eat after the bath, our attendant never checks our appetite; he flogs the cook instead. Man, did we appoint you his attendant? No, our child's: correct him, help him.

3.19.6 That's how we come to seem like children even when we're grown up. For in music the unmusical man is a child; in letters, the illiterate; in life, the uneducated.

## CHAPTER 20: THAT WE CAN BENEFIT FROM ALL EXTERNAL THINGS

*Illness, death, abuse and a bad neighbor can all benefit the person who uses them well.*

3.20.1 When it comes to theoretical impressions, nearly everyone has placed good and bad in ourselves, not in externals.

3.20.2 No one says it's good that it's day, bad that it's night, and the greatest of evils that three is four. What do they say?

3.20.3 That knowledge is good and error bad, so that even in connection with falsehood itself a good arises: the knowledge that it is false.

3.20.4 It ought to be the same with life. Health is good and illness bad? No, man. What then? Being healthy well is good, being healthy badly is bad. —So one can benefit even from illness? —By God, can't one benefit from death? Can't one from being lame?

3.20.5 Do you think Menoeceus gained only a little when he died? —May anyone who says such things gain [or] what he gained! —Come, man, didn't he preserve the patriot, the high-minded man, the trustworthy, the noble man in himself? And if he'd lived on, wouldn't he have lost all that?[25]

3.20.6 Wouldn't he have acquired the opposites? Wouldn't he have taken on the coward, the base man, the traitor to his country, the man who clings to life? Come now, do you still think he gained little by dying?

3.20.7 No? But did Admetus' father gain much by living on so basely and wretchedly?

3.20.8 Didn't he die later anyway? Stop, for the gods' sake, admiring material things. Stop making yourselves slaves, first of things, and then, because of them, of the people who can get them for you or take them away.

3.20.9 So can one benefit from these things? —From everything. —Even from someone who abuses you? —What good does a sparring partner do an athlete? The greatest. This man too becomes my training partner: he trains my patience, my freedom from anger, my gentleness.

3.20.10 No? The man who grips me by the neck and gets my hips and shoulders into shape does me good, and the trainer is right to say, "Lift the pestle with both hands," and the heavier it is, the more I benefit; but if someone trains me in freedom from anger, doesn't he do me good?

25 In myth Menoeceus, son of Creon, killed himself to save Thebes.

3.20.11 This is what it is not to know how to benefit from people. A bad neighbor? Bad for himself, but good for me: he trains my good temper, my fairness.

3.20.12 A bad father? Bad for himself, but good for me. This is Hermes' wand: "Touch whatever you like," he says, "and it will turn to gold." No, rather: bring whatever you like, and I'll make it good. Bring illness, bring death, bring poverty, bring abuse, a trial for my life: all these things will become beneficial with Hermes' wand.

3.20.13 "What will you do with death?" Why, what else but make it do you credit, or show through it, in action, what a man is who follows the will of nature?

3.20.14 "What will you do with illness?" I'll show its nature, I'll shine in it, I'll be steady, I'll keep the smooth flow of life, I won't flatter the doctor, I won't pray to die.

3.20.15 What more do you want? Whatever you give me, I'll make it blessed, a source of happiness, dignified, enviable.

3.20.16 No; instead it's "Watch out you don't get ill: it's bad." As if someone said, "Watch out you never get the impression that three is four: it's bad." Man, how is it bad? If I form the right opinion about it, how can it harm me any more? Won't it rather benefit me?

3.20.17 So if I form the right opinion about poverty, about illness, about not holding office, isn't that enough for me? Won't they be beneficial? How then must I still look for bad and good in externals?

3.20.18 But what happens? All this goes as far as here, and nobody takes it home. Straightaway it's war with the slave boy, with the neighbors, with those who mocked us, with those who laughed at us.

3.20.19 Bless Lesbius, because every day he proves that I know nothing.[26]

26 Lesbius is otherwise unknown, presumably someone in Epictetus' household or circle.

## CHAPTER 21: TO THOSE WHO LIGHTLY SET UP AS TEACHERS

*Epictetus warns students against setting up as teachers before they have digested philosophy.*

3.21.1 Some people take in the principles raw and immediately want to vomit them up again, as people with weak stomachs do their food.

3.21.2 First digest it; then you won't vomit it up like that. Otherwise it really does become vomit, a filthy thing, not fit to eat.

3.21.3 Instead, once you've absorbed them, show us some change in your ruling center, the way athletes show their shoulders as the result of their training and eating, the way those who have mastered crafts show what they've learned.

3.21.4 The builder doesn't come and say, "Listen to me lecture on building." He takes a contract for a house, builds it, and shows that he has the skill.

3.21.5 You do something like that too. Eat like a human being, drink like a human being, dress, marry, have children, take part in public life; put up with abuse, bear with an inconsiderate brother, bear with a father, bear with a son, a neighbor, a traveling companion.

3.21.6 Show us these, so we can see that you really have learned something from the philosophers. No: "Come and hear me give my commentaries." Go away, look for people to throw up on.

3.21.7 "But I'll explain Chrysippus to you like no one else, I'll analyze his language with perfect clarity, and I might even throw in a dash of Antipater and Archedemus."

3.21.8 And is it for this that young men are to leave their countries and their own parents—to come and hear you explain little phrases?

3.21.9 Shouldn't they go home patient, cooperative, free from passion, tranquil, with the kind of provisions for life that let them set out and bear what happens well, and win distinction from it?

3.21.10 And how can you share with them what you don't have? What have you yourself done from the start but wear yourself out on this: how syllogisms are to be resolved, and shifting arguments, and arguments that conclude by questioning?

3.21.11 "But so-and-so runs a school; why shouldn't I have one too?" These things don't happen at random, slave, or by chance. There must be the right age, and the right way of life, and God as guide.

3.21.12 No? Nobody sets sail from a harbor without sacrificing to the gods and calling on them for help, and people don't sow without first invoking Demeter; but will someone who takes on so great a task without the gods take it on safely, and will those who come to him come to good fortune?

3.21.13 What else are you doing, man, but profaning the Mysteries and saying, "There's a hall at Eleusis; look, there's one here too. There's a hierophant there; I'll make a hierophant too. There's a herald there; I'll appoint a herald. There's a torchbearer there; I'll have a torchbearer. There are torches there; here too. The words are the same. How is what goes on here different from what goes on there?"[27]

3.21.14 Most impious man, is there no difference? These things do good according to the place and the time; and with sacrifice, and with prayers, when one has purified oneself beforehand and is disposed in one's mind to approach sacred rites, and ancient sacred rites. That's how the Mysteries become beneficial;

3.21.15 that's how we come to the impression that all these things were established by the ancients for education and for the correction of life.

3.21.16 But you divulge them and profane them at the wrong time, in the wrong place, without sacrifices, without purity. You don't have the robe a hierophant must have, or the hair, or the right headband, or the voice, or the age; you haven't kept yourself pure as he has. You've simply picked up the words by them-

27 The Mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis, near Athens, were secret rites led by the hierophant, who revealed the sacred objects; divulging them was sacrilege.

selves, and you recite them. Are the words sacred in and of themselves?

3.21.17 You have to come to these things in a different way. It's a great matter, it's a mystery; it's not given at random or to just anyone.

3.21.18 But perhaps not even being wise is enough for taking care of the young. There also has to be a certain readiness and aptitude for it, by Zeus, and a certain kind of body, and above all God must advise you to take up this position,

3.21.19 as he advised Socrates to take up the role of refuting, Diogenes the kingly role of rebuking, Zeno the role of teaching and laying down doctrine.

3.21.20 But you open a clinic with nothing but drugs, without knowing where or how they're applied, or having bothered to find out.

3.21.21 "Look, he has these eye salves; I have them too." Do you also have the power to use them, then? Do you know when and how and whom they'll help?

3.21.22 Then why are you gambling with the most important things, why are you being reckless, why are you taking on something that has nothing to do with you? Leave it to those who are able, to those who do it credit. Don't you heap disgrace on philosophy too, through yourself, and don't become one of those who bring the work into disrepute.

3.21.23 If the principles fascinate you, sit down and turn them over by yourself. But never call yourself a philosopher, or let anyone else call you one; say instead, "He's mistaken. For I don't desire any differently from before, or have impulses toward other things, or assent to other things, and in general I haven't changed at all from my former condition in my use of impressions."

3.21.24 Think this, and say it about yourself, if you want to think as you deserve. Otherwise, go on gambling and doing what you're doing. That's what suits you.

## CHAPTER 22: ON THE CYNIC CALLING

*A student drawn to the Cynic life is told what that calling demands.*

3.22.1 When one of his students, who seemed inclined to take up the Cynic life, asked him what sort of person the Cynic has to be, and what the preconception of the thing is, he replied: We'll look into it at leisure.

3.22.2 But this much I can tell you: anyone who takes on so great a thing without God is hateful to God, and wants nothing else than to disgrace himself in public.

3.22.3 Nobody comes into a well-run household and says to himself, "I ought to be the steward." Otherwise the master turns round, sees him arrogantly giving orders, drags him out and thrashes him.

3.22.4 So it is in this great city too. For here too there is a master of the house who assigns each thing.

3.22.5 "You are the sun. You can make your round and produce the year and the seasons, make the fruits grow and nourish them, stir up the winds and calm them, and warm people's bodies in due measure. Go, make your round, and so set everything in motion, from the greatest to the smallest."

3.22.6 "You are a calf. When a lion appears, mind your own business; otherwise you'll be sorry. You are a bull: step forward and fight. For this is your part, it befits you, and you can do it."

3.22.7 "You can lead the army against Troy: be Agamemnon. You can fight Hector in single combat: be Achilles."

3.22.8 But if Thersites had come forward and laid claim to the command, either he wouldn't have got it, or, if he had, he would have disgraced himself before more witnesses.

3.22.9 You too, think the matter over carefully: it's not what you think it is.

3.22.10 "I wear a rough cloak now, and I'll have one then. I sleep hard now, and I'll sleep hard then. I'll take a little bag and a stick, and I'll start going round begging from the people I meet, and abusing them. And if I see someone getting his body hair

plucked, I'll rebuke him, or someone with his hair curled, or strutting about in scarlet."

3.22.11 If you imagine the thing to be something like that, keep well away from it. Don't go near it; it's nothing to do with you.

3.22.12 But if you imagine it as it really is and don't count yourself unworthy of it, consider how great a thing you're undertaking.

3.22.13 First, in what concerns yourself, you mustn't appear the same in anything as you do in what you're doing now: not blaming God, not blaming any human being. You must remove desire entirely, and transfer your aversion to what is within your choice alone. You must have no anger, no rage, no envy, no pity. No girl must look beautiful to you, no scrap of reputation, no boy, no little cake.

3.22.14 For you have to understand this: other people have walls and houses and darkness to shield them when they do any such thing, and they have plenty of ways to hide it. A man shuts his door, posts someone at his bedroom: "If anyone comes, say he's out, he's busy."

3.22.15 But the Cynic, instead of all these, has to shield himself with self-respect. Otherwise he'll be disgracing himself naked and under the open sky. That is his house, that his door, that the guards at his bedroom, that his darkness.

3.22.16 For he mustn't want to hide anything of his own (otherwise he's gone, he's destroyed the Cynic in himself, the man of the open air, the free man; he has begun to fear something within, he has begun to need something to hide him), nor can he, even if he wants to. Where will he hide himself, or how?

3.22.17 And if by chance he, the public teacher, the tutor of all, gets caught out, what must he go through?

3.22.18 So if he's afraid of these things, can he still have the confidence, with his whole soul, to oversee other people?

3.22.19 Impossible; it can't be done. First, then, you must make your ruling center pure, and this your plan of life:

3.22.20 "Now my material is my mind, as timber is the carpenter's, as leather is the shoemaker's; and my work is the right use of impressions."

3.22.21 "My poor body is nothing to me; its parts are nothing to me. Death? Let it come when it wants, whether to the whole or to some part."

3.22.22 "Exile? And where can anyone throw me out to? Outside the universe he can't. Wherever I go, there's the sun, there's the moon, there are the stars, dreams, omens, communion with the gods."

## MESSENGER AND SCOUT

*The true Cynic is sent by Zeus to show people where good and bad really lie.*

3.22.23 Then, prepared in this way, the true Cynic can't rest content with this. He must know that he has been sent by Zeus as a messenger to human beings about good and bad things, to show them that they've gone astray and are looking for the nature of good and bad elsewhere, where it isn't, and don't consider where it is;

3.22.24 and that, like Diogenes when he was led off to Philip after the battle of Chaeronea, he is a scout. For the Cynic really is a scout of what is friendly to human beings and what is hostile.[28]

3.22.25 And he must scout the ground carefully, then come back and report the truth, not so terrified that he points out as enemies those who aren't, and not thrown into disturbance or confusion by his impressions in any other way.

3.22.26 So he must be able, if it so happens, to raise his voice, step up onto the tragic stage, and say Socrates' words: Ah, people, where are you rushing? What are you doing, you wretches? You're tumbling up and down like blind men. You've abandoned the real road and are going off by another; you're

28 Philip II of Macedon defeated Athens and Thebes at Chaeronea in 338 BC; Diogenes, taken prisoner and accused of spying, said he had come to spy out Philip's insatiable greed.

looking for the smooth flow of life and happiness elsewhere, where they aren't, and when someone else shows you, you don't believe him.[29]

3.22.27 Why are you looking for it outside? It isn't in the body. If you don't believe it, look at Myron, look at Ophellius. It isn't in possessions. If you don't believe it, look at Croesus, look at the rich today, how full of lamentation their lives are. It isn't in office. Otherwise those who've been consul two or three times ought to be happy; but they aren't.[30]

3.22.28 Whom shall we believe about this? You, who see their affairs from outside and are dazzled by the impression, or the men themselves?

3.22.29 What do they say? Listen to them when they lament, when they groan, when they think that because of those very consulships, and their reputation and prominence, they're more wretched and in greater danger.

3.22.30 It isn't in kingship. Otherwise Nero would have been happy, and Sardanapalus. But not even Agamemnon was happy, though he was a finer man than Sardanapalus and Nero. While the others are snoring, what is he doing? "Many a hair he tore from his head by the roots." And what does he himself say? "I wander thus," he says, "and I am distraught; my heart / leaps out of my breast." Poor man, which of your things is in a bad way?[31]

3.22.31 Your possessions? They aren't. Your body? It isn't. But you're rich in gold and rich in bronze. Then what's wrong with you? That part of you, whatever it is, has been neglected and ruined: the part with which we desire, with which we feel aversion, with which we have impulses and repulsions.

3.22.32 How has it been neglected? It doesn't know the nature of the good, for which it was born, or the nature of the bad, or what is its own and what belongs to others. And when something that

29 The words echo the *Clitophon*, a dialogue attributed to Plato, in which Socrates harangues people like a god on the tragic stage.

30 Myron and Ophellius were presumably famous strongmen or athletes of the day.

31 Sardanapalus was a legendary Assyrian king famous for luxury; the lines on Agamemnon are from Homer's *Iliad* (Book 10).

belongs to others is in a bad way, it says, "Woe is me, the Greeks are in danger!"

3.22.33 Wretched ruling center, the only thing left neglected and uncared for! "They're going to die, killed by the Trojans." And if the Trojans don't kill them, won't they die anyway? "Yes, but not all at once." What difference does that make? If dying is bad, it's just as bad whether it happens together or one by one. Is anything else going to happen than the separation of the poor body and the soul?

3.22.34 Nothing. And if the Greeks are destroyed, is the door shut for you? Can't you die? "I can." Then why are you grieving? "Alas, I'm a king, and I hold the scepter of Zeus!" A king doesn't become unfortunate, any more than a god does.

3.22.35 What are you, then? A shepherd, truly: you weep the way shepherds do when a wolf carries off one of their sheep. And these people you rule are sheep.

3.22.36 And why did you come here at all? Was your desire in danger, your aversion, your impulse, your repulsion? "No," he says, "but my brother's little wife was carried off."

3.22.37 Isn't it a great gain to be rid of an adulterous little wife? "Are we to be despised by the Trojans, then?" What sort of people are they, wise or foolish? If wise, why are you fighting them? If foolish, why do you care?

3.22.38 "Where is the good, then, since it isn't in these things? Tell us, lord messenger and scout." "Where you don't think it is, and where you don't want to look for it. For if you wanted to, you'd have found it in yourselves, and you wouldn't be wandering about outside or looking for what belongs to others as if it were your own."

3.22.39 "Turn to yourselves; learn the preconceptions you have. What sort of thing do you imagine the good to be? The smooth flow of life, happiness, freedom from hindrance. Come, don't you naturally imagine it as something great? As something precious? As something that can't be harmed?"

3.22.40 "In what sort of material, then, should you look for the smooth flow of life and freedom from hindrance? In material

that's slave, or in material that's free?" "In what's free." "Then is your poor body free, or a slave?" "We don't know." "Don't you know that it's a slave of fever, of gout, of eye disease, of dysentery, of a tyrant, of fire, of iron, of everything stronger than it?"

3.22.41 "Yes, a slave." "How, then, can anything to do with the body still be unhindered? And how can what is by nature dead—earth, clay—be great or precious? What then? Have you nothing that's free?" "Perhaps nothing."

3.22.42 "And who can force you to assent to what appears false?" "No one." "And who can force you not to assent to what appears true?" "No one."

3.22.43 "Here, then, you see that there is something in you that is free by nature. And which of you can desire, or feel aversion, or have an impulse or a repulsion, or prepare or propose anything, without having received an impression of something advantageous, or of something that isn't his duty?" "No one."

3.22.44 "So here too you have something unhindered and free. You wretches, work on this, take care of this, look for the good here."

3.22.45 And how is it possible for someone who has nothing—naked, homeless, without a hearth, filthy, without a slave, without a city—to live a life that flows smoothly?

3.22.46 Look, God has sent you someone to show you in action that it is possible.

3.22.47 "Look at me: I'm without a home, without a city, without property, without a slave. I sleep on the ground. No wife, no children, no little governor's mansion, only earth and sky and one rough cloak."

3.22.48 "And what do I lack? Am I not free from pain, free from fear, free? When has any of you seen me [me] failing to get what I desire, or falling into what I'm averse to? When have I blamed God or man, when have I accused anyone? Has any of you seen me with a gloomy face?"

3.22.49 "And how do I deal with the people you fear and admire? Don't I treat them as slaves? Who sees me and doesn't think he's seeing his king and master?"

3.22.50 There you have the words of a Cynic, there's his character, there's his purpose. But no: it's a little bag and a stick and big jaws; gulping down everything you give him, or hoarding it, or abusing the people he meets at the wrong moment, or showing off his fine shoulder.

3.22.51 Do you see how you're about to set your hand to so great a thing? First take a mirror, look at your shoulders, examine your loins, your thighs. You're about to enter your name for the Olympics, man, not some cold, miserable little contest.

3.22.52 At the Olympics you can't simply be beaten and leave. First you have to be disgraced with the whole world watching, not just Athenians or Spartans or people from Nicopolis; then the man who entered rashly has to be flogged, and before the flogging he has to go thirsty, be scorched by the sun, and swallow a lot of sand.

3.22.53 Think it over more carefully, know yourself, consult the divine sign, don't attempt it without God. For if he advises you to, know that he wants you either to become great or to take a lot of blows.

3.22.54 For this very fine thing is also woven into the Cynic's lot: he has to be beaten like a donkey, and while he's being beaten, love the very people who beat him, as the father of all, as their brother.

3.22.55 No? If someone beats you, stand in the middle of the street and shout, "Caesar, look what I'm suffering in your peace! Let's go to the proconsul!"

3.22.56 But what is Caesar to a Cynic, or a proconsul, or anyone else, except the one who has sent him down and whom he serves, Zeus? Does he call on anyone but him? And isn't he convinced that whatever he suffers of these things, it's Zeus training him?

3.22.57 Heracles, when he was being trained by Eurystheus, didn't consider himself wretched; he carried out everything he was ordered to do without hesitation. And is this man, when he's being put to the contest and trained by Zeus, going to shout and

complain—and still be worthy to carry the scepter of Diogenes? Listen to what Diogenes says, sick with fever, to the passers-by:

3.22.58 "You wretches," he said, "won't you stay? You go all that way to Olympia to see athletes destroy each other or fight; don't you want to see a fight between a fever and a man?"

3.22.59 A man like that would have been quick, wouldn't he, to accuse God, who sent him down, of treating him unworthily—he who gloried in his troubles and thought himself worth being a spectacle for passers-by! What would he accuse him of? That he behaves with dignity? What would he charge him with? That he displays his excellence more brilliantly?

3.22.60 Come, what does he say about poverty, about death, about hardship? How did he compare his own happiness with that of the Great King?

3.22.61 Or rather, he didn't think they could be compared at all. For where there are disturbances and pains and fears and unfulfilled desires and aversions that fall into what they avoid, and envies and jealousies, where is there any way in for happiness? And wherever there are rotten judgments, all these things are bound to be there.

3.22.62 When the young man asked whether, if he fell ill and a friend asked him to come to his house to be nursed, he should accept: "And where will you find me a Cynic's friend?"

3.22.63 he said. For he must be another man like him, if he's to be worthy of being counted his friend. He must share his scepter and his kingship, and be a worthy servant, if he's to be thought worthy of his friendship, as Diogenes was of Antisthenes', as Crates was of Diogenes'.[32]

3.22.64 Or do you think that anyone who comes up and says hello to him is his friend, and that he'll think him worthy of being gone to stay with?

3.22.65 So if you like the idea and have something like that in mind, look instead for a nice dunghill to have your fever on, one that shelters you from the north wind so you don't catch a chill.

32 Crates was the pupil of Diogenes.

3.22.66 But you seem to me to want to go off to someone's house and have a good feed for once. What business have you, then, taking on so great a thing?

## MARRIAGE, CHILDREN AND POLITICS

*In the present world the Cynic should stay unattached, serving all humanity as father and citizen.*

3.22.67 But marriage, he said, and children—will the Cynic take these on as a matter of principle? —If you give me a city of wise men, he said, perhaps no one will readily take up the Cynic life at all. For why should he take on that way of life?

3.22.68 Still, if we suppose it, nothing will prevent him from marrying and having children. For his wife will be another like him, and his father-in-law another like him, and the children will be brought up in the same way.

3.22.69 But with things as they are now, as if in battle formation, shouldn't the Cynic be free of distraction, wholly devoted to the service of God, able to go about among people, not tied down by the duties of private life, or entangled in relationships? If he violates them, he'll no longer keep the role of a fine and good man; if he keeps them, he'll destroy the messenger and scout and herald of the gods.

3.22.70 For look: he has to perform certain services for his father-in-law, pay his dues to his wife's other relatives, and to his wife herself. From then on he's shut into nursing the sick, into earning a living.

3.22.71 To leave everything else aside, he needs a kettle to heat water for the baby, so he can bathe it in a tub; wool for his wife when she's given birth, oil, a cot, a cup (the bits of equipment are multiplying already);

3.22.72 all the rest of the business, the distraction. Where, now, is that king of mine who has time for the common good, "to whom the people are entrusted, and so many cares belong"? Who must watch over others—the married, those with children —seeing who treats his wife well, who badly, who quarrels,

which household is stable and which isn't, going round like a doctor and feeling pulses?

3.22.73 "You have a fever, you have a headache, you have gout. You, fast; you, eat; you, no bath. You need surgery; you need cautery."

3.22.74 Where is the leisure for someone tied down by the duties of private life? Doesn't he have to get little cloaks for the children? Come, and send them off to the schoolmaster with their writing tablets, their pens, their notebooks, and get a cot ready for them too? For they can't be Cynics straight out of the womb. Otherwise it would have been better to expose them at birth than to kill them this way.

3.22.75 See what we're reducing the Cynic to, how we're taking away his kingship.

3.22.76 —Yes, but Crates married. —You're telling me about a special circumstance that arose from love, and you're positing a wife who was another Crates. We, though, are inquiring about ordinary marriage, without special circumstances; and inquiring that way, we don't find that, in the present state of things, it's a priority for the Cynic.[33]

3.22.77 Then how, he says, will he still preserve society? —Good God! Do people do more good for mankind by bringing into the world two or three snotty-nosed brats to replace them, than by watching over all people as far as they can—what they're doing, how they're living, what they're taking care of, what they're neglecting against what's fitting?

3.22.78 Did those who left little children to the Thebans do them more good than Epaminondas, who died childless? And did Priam, who fathered fifty good-for-nothings, or Danaus, or Aeolus, contribute more to society than Homer?[34]

3.22.79 And then, a military command or a piece of writing will keep a man from marriage or having children, and he won't be

33 Crates' wife, Hipparchia, herself took up the Cynic life.

34 Epaminondas, the great Theban general (died 362 BC), had no children; Danaus and Aeolus were mythical fathers of large families.

thought to have traded his childlessness for nothing; but the Cynic's kingship won't be worth the price?

3.22.80 Perhaps we don't perceive its greatness, and don't imagine Diogenes' character as it deserves, but look at the present lot, "dogs of the table, keepers of the gate," who imitate those men in nothing, unless perhaps they turn into farters, and nothing more?

3.22.81 Otherwise these things wouldn't bother us, and we wouldn't be amazed if he doesn't marry or have children. Man, he has fathered all people: he has the men as his sons, the women as his daughters. That's how he approaches everyone, that's how he cares for everyone.

3.22.82 Or do you think it's out of meddlesomeness that he abuses the people he meets? He does it as a father, as a brother, and as a servant of the common father, Zeus.

3.22.83 If you like, ask me whether he'll take part in politics too. You nitwit, are you looking for a greater politics than the one he's engaged in?

3.22.84 Or is he going to come forward among the Athenians and speak about revenues or ways and means, when he ought to converse with all people, with Athenians alike, with Corinthians alike, with Romans alike, not about ways and means or revenues, or peace or war, but about happiness [or] and unhappiness, about good fortune and bad, about slavery and freedom?

3.22.85 When a man is engaged in politics on that scale, you ask me whether he'll take part in politics? Ask me too whether he'll hold office. Again I'll tell you: you fool, what office is greater than the one he holds?

3.22.86 Such a man does, though, need a certain kind of body too. For if he comes forward consumptive, thin and pale, his testimony no longer makes the same impression.

3.22.87 He must not only show the qualities of his soul and prove to laymen that it's possible to be fine and good without the things they admire, but also demonstrate through his body that a simple, frugal, open-air life doesn't damage even the body:

3.22.88 "Look, I and my body are witnesses to this too." That's what Diogenes used to do: he went about glowing with health, and turned the heads of the many by his very body.

3.22.89 But a Cynic who is pitied looks like a beggar: everyone turns away, everyone is offended. Nor should he look dirty, so that he doesn't drive people away that way either; even his squalor should be clean and attractive.

3.22.90 The Cynic also needs a great deal of natural charm and sharpness (otherwise he's just snot, nothing more), so that he can meet whatever comes up readily and aptly.

3.22.91 As Diogenes did with the man who said, "Are you the Diogenes who doesn't believe the gods exist?" "How can that be," he said, "when I consider you hateful to the gods?"

3.22.92 Again, when Alexander stood over him as he slept and said, "A man of counsel should not sleep all night," he answered, still half asleep, "to whom the people are entrusted, and so many cares belong."[35]

3.22.93 Above all, his ruling center must be purer than the sun. Otherwise he's bound to be a gambler and a cheat, a man who is caught up in some evil himself and yet rebukes others.

3.22.94 For see what it's like. For these kings and tyrants, it was their bodyguards and weapons that gave them the power to rebuke people and to punish wrongdoers, even when they were bad themselves. For the Cynic, instead of weapons and bodyguards, it's his conscience that hands him this authority,

3.22.95 when he sees that he has kept watch and toiled on behalf of human beings; that he has gone to sleep pure and sleep has left him purer still; that whatever he has thought, he has thought as a friend of the gods, as a servant, as one who shares in the rule of Zeus; and that everywhere he has at hand the line "Lead me, Zeus, and you too, Destiny," and also "If this is what pleases the gods, so be it"—[36]

35 Both lines come from Homer's *Iliad* (2.24–25), where a dream rebukes the sleeping Agamemnon.

36 The first line is from Cleanthes' prayer; the second echoes Socrates in Plato's *Crito*.

3.22.96 why shouldn't he have the confidence to speak freely to his own brothers, to his children, in a word to his kin?

3.22.97 That's why someone in this state is neither a busybody nor a meddler. For he isn't meddling in other people's affairs when he oversees human affairs, but in his own. Otherwise, call the general a meddler too when he oversees his soldiers, inspects them, keeps watch on them, and punishes the disorderly.

3.22.98 But if you rebuke others while you've got a little cake under your arm, I'll say to you: Wouldn't you rather go off into a corner and eat up what you've stolen? What have you to do with other people's affairs?

3.22.99 For who are you? Are you the bull of the herd, or the queen of the bees? Show me the tokens of your leadership, like the ones she has from nature. But if you're a drone laying claim to the kingship of the bees, don't you think your fellow citizens will throw you out too, as the bees do the drones?

3.22.100 The Cynic must have so much patience that the many think him insensible, a stone. No one abuses him, no one strikes him, no one insults him; his poor body he has himself handed over to anyone who wants it, to use as he pleases.

3.22.101 For he remembers that the worse must be overcome by the better, where it is worse; and his poor body is inferior to the many, as the weaker is to the stronger.

3.22.102 So he never goes down into this contest, where he can be beaten; he gives up at once what belongs to others, and lays no claim to what is slave.

3.22.103 But where choice and the use of impressions are concerned, there you'll see how many eyes he has, so that you'd say Argus was blind compared with him.[37]

3.22.104 Is there anywhere a hasty assent, anywhere a random impulse, anywhere a desire that fails, an aversion that falls into what it avoids, an unfulfilled purpose, anywhere blame, anywhere self-abasement or envy?

37 Argus was the many-eyed watchman of Greek myth.

3.22.105 Here is where his close attention and intensity go; as for the rest, he lies on his back and snores. Perfect peace. No one becomes a robber of choice; no one becomes its tyrant.

3.22.106 Of the body? Yes. And of property? Yes; and of offices and honors. So what does he care about these? When someone tries to frighten him with them, he says, "Go away, look for children. Masks are frightening to them, but I know they're made of clay and there's nothing inside."

3.22.107 That's the kind of thing you're deliberating about. So, if you like, for God's sake, put it off, and first look at your preparation.

3.22.108 For look what Hector says to Andromache: "Go home instead," he says, "and weave; war will be the concern of men, / all of them, and above all mine."

3.22.109 So he was aware both of his own preparation and of her weakness.

## CHAPTER 23: TO THOSE WHO READ AND LECTURE FOR DISPLAY

*Epictetus mocks philosophers who give readings and lectures to win praise rather than help.*

3.23.1 First tell yourself who you want to be; then do what you do accordingly. For that's how we see things work in almost everything else too.

3.23.2 Athletes first decide who they want to be, and then do what follows from it. If it's a long-distance runner, such-and-such a diet, such-and-such walking, such-and-such massage, such-and-such exercise; if a sprinter, all these are different; if a pentathlete, more different still. You'll find the same with the crafts.

3.23.3 If you're a carpenter, you'll have such-and-such; if a smith, such-and-such. For whatever we do, if we refer it to no purpose, we'll do it at random; and if to a purpose we shouldn't, we'll do it wrongly.

3.23.4 Now, there's a general reference and a particular one. First, to act as a human being. What does this include? Not like a sheep, if gently; if harmfully, not like a wild beast.

3.23.5 The particular reference is to each person's pursuit and choice. The lyre-player acts as a lyre-player, the carpenter as a carpenter, the philosopher as a philosopher, the orator as an orator.

3.23.6 So when you say, "Come and listen to me read to you," first consider whether you're doing it at random. Then, if you find you're referring it to some purpose, consider whether it's the right one. Do you want to do good, or to be praised?

3.23.7 Straightaway you hear him say, "What do I care about praise from the many?" And he's right to say it. Nor does the musician care, insofar as he's a musician, or the geometer.

3.23.8 So you want to do good? For what purpose? Tell us too, so that we can run to your lecture hall ourselves. Now, can anyone do others good who hasn't been benefited himself? No. No more than someone who isn't a carpenter can in carpentry, or someone who isn't a shoemaker in shoemaking.

3.23.9 So do you want to know whether you've been benefited? Bring out your judgments, philosopher. What does desire promise? Not to fail to get. What does aversion promise?

3.23.10 Not to fall into what it avoids. Well, are we fulfilling their promise? Tell me the truth; and if you lie, I'll tell you: the other day, when your audience gathered rather coolly and didn't cheer you, you walked out crushed;

3.23.11 the other day, when you'd been praised, you went round asking everyone, "What did you think of me?" "Wonderful, sir, upon my life." "How did I do that bit?" "Which bit?" "Where I described Pan and the Nymphs."

3.23.12 "Superb." And then you tell me you conduct yourself in accordance with nature in desire and aversion? Get along with you. Go and convince someone else.

3.23.13 And didn't you praise so-and-so the other day, against your own judgment? Didn't you flatter so-and-so, the senator?

Would you have wanted your children to be like that? —Heaven forbid!

3.23.14 —Then why were you praising him and fussing over him? —He's a gifted young man, and he loves listening to discourses. —How do you know? —He admires me. —There's your proof. And then what do you think? Don't these very people secretly despise you?

3.23.15 So when a man who knows perfectly well that he has neither done nor thought anything good finds a philosopher calling him "gifted, straightforward, unspoiled," what else do you think he says to himself but "This fellow is going to want something from me one of these days"?

3.23.16 Or tell me, what has he done that shows a gifted nature? Look, he's been with you all this time. He's heard you discoursing, he's heard you reading. Has he calmed down? Has he turned his attention to himself? Has he realized what evils he's in? Has he thrown off his conceit? Is he looking for someone to teach him?

3.23.17 —He is, he says. —Someone to teach him how to live? No, you fool, how to express himself. That's why he admires you, too. Listen to what he says: "This man writes with the greatest artistry, far better than Dio." That's a completely different thing.[38]

3.23.18 Does he ever say, "The man has self-respect, he's trustworthy, he's undisturbed"? And even if he had said so, I'd have said to him, "Since this man is trustworthy, what is this 'trustworthy man'?" And if he couldn't say, I'd have added, "First learn what you're saying, and then say it."

3.23.19 So you're in this bad state, gaping after people who'll praise you and counting your listeners, and you want to benefit others? "Today many more people came to hear me." "Yes, a lot." "Five hundred, we reckon." "Nonsense. Make it a thousand." "Dio never had so many listeners." "How could he?" "And they have a fine ear for speeches, too."

3.23.20 "Beauty, sir, can move even a stone." There you have the words of a philosopher! There's the disposition of a man who'll benefit others! There's a man who has listened to reason, who has read the Socratic writings as Socratic, and not as if they were by Lysias and Isocrates! "'I have often wondered by what arguments ever'—no: 'by what argument ever'—that's smoother than the other."[39]

3.23.21 Have you read them any other way than as little songs? Because if you'd read them as you should, you wouldn't be occupied with these things. You'd be looking at that other line instead: "Anytus and Meletus can kill me, but they can't harm me," and "I have always been the kind of man who heeds nothing of mine except the argument that seems best to me when I reflect on it."

3.23.22 That's why—who ever heard Socrates say, "I know something, and I teach it"? No, he'd send one person here and another there. So people used to come to him asking to be introduced to philosophers, and he'd take them along and introduce them.

3.23.23 Oh no—he'd send them off saying, "Come and hear me lecture today at Quadratus' house"! Why should I hear you? Do you want to show me that you put words together elegantly? So you put them together, man. And what good does that do you?

3.23.24 "But praise me." What do you mean by "praise"? "Say 'Bravo!' and 'Marvelous!' to me." There, I'm saying it. But if praise is what the philosophers mean by something that falls in the category of the good, what have I got to praise you for? If speaking well is a good, teach me, and I'll praise you.

3.23.25 What then? Should we take no pleasure in listening to such things? Heaven forbid. I take pleasure in listening to a lyre-player, too. But does that mean I have to stand up and play the lyre myself? Listen to what Socrates says: "It would not be fit-

38 Dio of Prusa (Dio Chrysostom), the most celebrated orator of Epictetus' day.
39 He is fussing over the wording of the opening of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*: "I have often wondered by what arguments the accusers of Socrates persuaded the Athenians..."

ting, gentlemen, for a man of my age to come before you like a youth making up speeches." "Like a youth," he says.

3.23.26 For it really is a pretty little skill: picking out nice little words and putting them together, coming forward and reading or reciting them gracefully, and exclaiming in the middle of the reading, "Not many people can follow this, I swear by your lives."

3.23.27 Does a philosopher invite people to come and hear him? —Isn't it rather that, just as the sun draws its own nourishment to itself, so he draws to himself those who are going to be benefited? What doctor invites anyone to come and be treated by him? Though I hear that nowadays doctors in Rome do the inviting. In my day, though, they were the ones invited.

3.23.28 "I invite you to come and hear that you're in a bad way, that you care about everything rather than what you ought to care about, that you don't know what's good and what's bad, and that you're miserable and unfortunate." A charming invitation! And yet if the philosopher's words don't produce this effect, both they and the speaker are dead.

3.23.29 Rufus used to say, "If you have the leisure to praise me, then I'm saying nothing." And so he spoke in such a way that each of us, sitting there, thought someone had been telling tales about him. That's how well he got a grip on what we were doing, how vividly he put each person's faults before his eyes.

3.23.30 A philosopher's school, gentlemen, is a doctor's clinic. You shouldn't leave it having enjoyed yourselves, but having been in pain. For you don't come in healthy: one of you has a dislocated shoulder, another an abscess, another a fistula, another a headache.

3.23.31 And then am I to sit down and recite little thoughts and clever little epigrams to you, so that you go out praising me—one carrying his shoulder out just as he brought it in, another with his head in the same state, another with his fistula, another with his abscess?

3.23.32 And is it for this that young men are to leave home and abandon their parents, their friends, their relatives and their bit

of property—so that they can say "Bravo!" to you as you deliver your little epigrams? Is this what Socrates did, what Zeno did, what Cleanthes did?

3.23.33 What then? Is there no such thing as the style of exhortation? —Who says there isn't? Just as there's the style of refutation and the style of instruction. But who ever named a fourth alongside these, the style of display?

3.23.34 For what is the style of exhortation? Being able to show one person or many the conflict they're floundering in, and that they care about everything rather than what they really want. For they want the things that lead to happiness, but they look for them in the wrong place.

3.23.35 For that to happen, do a thousand benches have to be set out and an audience invited, and you climb up onto a cushioned platform in a fancy robe or a little philosopher's cloak and describe how Achilles died? For the gods' sake, stop disgracing fine words and fine things, as far as it lies with you!

3.23.36 Nothing is more effective as exhortation than when the speaker makes it clear to his listeners that he needs them.

3.23.37 Or tell me, who ever heard you reading or discoursing and became anxious about himself, or turned his attention inward, or said as he left, "The philosopher really got to me; I mustn't go on doing these things"?

3.23.38 Isn't it rather that, if you're a great success, one says to another, "He put that bit about Xerxes elegantly," and another, "No, the battle at Thermopylae was better"? Is that what listening to a philosopher is?

## CHAPTER 24: THAT WE SHOULD NOT BECOME ATTACHED TO WHAT IS NOT UP TO US

*One should love others without being disturbed at parting from them or losing them.*

3.24.1 Don't let another person's going against nature become something bad for you. For you weren't born to share other people's humiliation or misfortune, but to share their good fortune.

3.24.2 And if someone is unfortunate, remember that his misfortune is his own doing. For God made all human beings to be happy, to be steady.

3.24.3 To this end he gave them resources, giving each person some things as his own and others as not his own. The things that can be hindered, taken away and compelled are not our own; the things that can't be hindered are our own. And the essence of good and bad he placed, as was fitting for one who cares for us and watches over us like a father, among the things that are our own.

3.24.4 "But I've left so-and-so, and he's distressed." Well, why did he regard what wasn't his as his own? Why, when he was enjoying seeing you, didn't he reflect that you're mortal, that you might go away? So he's paying the penalty for his own folly.

3.24.5 But you—what's your excuse? What are you weeping over yourself for? Or did you, too, never practice these things? Did you, like silly, worthless women, live with everything you enjoyed—places, people, pastimes—as if you'd always be with them? And now you sit there crying because you don't see the same people and don't spend your time in the same places.

3.24.6 Yes, that's what you deserve: to be more wretched than ravens and crows, which can fly wherever they like, move their nests and cross the seas without groaning or longing for what they had before.

3.24.7 —Yes, but they feel that way because they lack reason. — So we've been given reason by the gods for misfortune and misery, so that we can go on being wretched and mourning all our lives?

3.24.8 Or should everyone be immortal, and no one ever go away, and we ourselves never go anywhere, but stay rooted to the spot like plants? And if one of our friends goes away, should we sit and cry, and then, if he comes back, dance and clap our hands like children?

3.24.9 Won't we wean ourselves at last, and remember what we've heard from the philosophers—

3.24.10 if, that is, we didn't listen to them as if they were chanting spells: that this universe is one city, and the substance it's made of is one, and that there must be a certain cycle, with some things giving way to others, some dissolving and others coming into being, some staying in the same place and others moving?

3.24.11 Everything is full of friends: first gods, and then human beings, who are bound to one another by nature. Some must be together, others must part; and we must rejoice in those who are with us and not be distressed at those who leave.

3.24.12 And a human being, besides being by nature high-minded and disdainful of everything outside our choice, has this further gift: he isn't rooted in the earth or grown into it, but moves from one place to another, sometimes under the pressure of some need, and sometimes just for the sake of seeing things.

3.24.13 And what happened to Odysseus was something of this sort: "Many were the men whose cities he saw, and whose minds he came to know." And before him, Heracles went round the whole inhabited world "beholding the violence and the lawfulness of men," casting out and purging the one and bringing in the other in its place.

3.24.14 And yet how many friends do you think he had in Thebes, how many in Argos, how many in Athens, and how many he made on his travels? He even married wherever the moment seemed right to him, and fathered children, and left his children behind without groaning or longing for them, and without leaving them as orphans.

3.24.15 For he knew that no human being is an orphan, but that there is a father who always and unceasingly cares for all.

3.24.16 For he hadn't just heard it as a form of words that Zeus is the father of human beings: he thought of him as his own father, and called him that, and he did what he did with his eyes on him. That's why he could live happily anywhere.

3.24.17 But happiness and longing for what isn't there can never go together. For what is happy must have everything it wants; it

must be like someone who has eaten his fill. There mustn't be any thirst in it, any hunger.

3.24.18 —But Odysseus longed for his wife, and wept sitting on a rock. —Do you pay attention to Homer and his stories in everything? Or, if he really did weep, what else was he but unfortunate? And what fine and good man is unfortunate?

3.24.19 The universe really is badly governed if Zeus doesn't take care that his own citizens are like him: happy. But it isn't lawful or holy even to think such things.

3.24.20 No: if Odysseus wept and lamented, he wasn't a good man. For who is good if he doesn't know who he is? And who knows that, if he has forgotten that what comes into being perishes, and that it's impossible for one human being to be with another forever?

3.24.21 What then? To reach for what's impossible is slavish and stupid; it's the act of a stranger in the universe, fighting against God in the only way he can—with his own judgments.

3.24.22 But my mother grieves when she doesn't see me. —Well, why didn't she learn these teachings? And I'm not saying that you shouldn't try to keep her from lamenting, but that you shouldn't want what isn't your own at all costs.

3.24.23 Another person's grief isn't mine; my own grief is mine. So I'll put an end to mine at all costs, because that is up to me. The other's I'll try to stop as far as I can, but I won't try at all costs.

3.24.24 Otherwise I'll be fighting against God, setting myself up against Zeus, ranging myself against him over the ordering of the universe. And the wages of this fight against God and this disobedience won't be paid by my children's children, but by me myself—by day, and at night as I start up out of my dreams, disturbed, trembling at every piece of news, with my freedom from passion hanging on other people's letters.

3.24.25 Someone's arrived from Rome. "I only hope it's not bad news!" But what bad thing can happen to you there, where you aren't? Someone from Greece: "I only hope it's not bad news!" At

this rate, every place in the world can be a cause of misfortune for you.

3.24.26 Isn't it enough for you to be unfortunate where you are, without being so across the sea and by letter, too? Is that how secure your affairs are?

3.24.27 —What then, if my friends there die? —What else has happened but that mortals have died? Or how can you want to grow old and at the same time never see the death of anyone you love?

3.24.28 Don't you know that over a long span of time many different things are bound to happen: fever will get the better of one person, a bandit of another, a tyrant of another?

3.24.29 For that's what the world around us is like, and the people we live with: cold and heat, unsuitable food, journeys by land and by sea, winds, and all kinds of circumstances. They kill one man and exile another; they throw one into an embassy and another into a campaign.

3.24.30 So sit there in a flutter at all these things, mourning, unlucky, unhappy, dependent on another—and not on one or two, but on thousands upon thousands.

3.24.31 Is this what you heard from the philosophers? Is this what you learned? Don't you know that the whole business is a military campaign? One man has to stand guard, another has to go out and reconnoiter, another has to fight. It isn't possible for everyone to be in the same place, and it wouldn't be better if they were.

3.24.32 But you neglect to carry out the general's orders and complain whenever you're given a harsher one, and you don't see what you're making of the army, as far as it depends on you: that if everyone imitates you, no one will dig a trench, no one will put up a palisade, no one will stay awake on watch, no one will face danger, and every one of them will seem useless for service.

3.24.33 Again, if you sail as a sailor on a ship, take one spot and stick to it doggedly. If you have to climb the mast, refuse; if you have to run to the bow, refuse. And what captain will put up

with you? Won't he throw you overboard like a useless piece of gear, nothing but a nuisance and a bad example to the other sailors?

3.24.34 So it is here too: each person's life is a kind of campaign, and a long and varied one at that. You have to keep to the soldier's part and do each thing at the general's nod—

3.24.35 and, if possible, guess what he wants before he says it. For that general and this one are not alike, either in power or in the excellence of their character.

3.24.36 You've been posted in an imperial city, and not in some lowly position, but as a senator for life. Don't you know that a man like that has to spend little time on his household and most of it away from home, governing or being governed, or serving some official, or on campaign, or sitting in judgment? And then you want to be fixed to the same places and rooted there like a plant?

3.24.37 —Yes, because it's pleasant. —Who says it isn't? But soup is pleasant too, and a beautiful woman is pleasant. What else do those who make pleasure their goal say?

3.24.38 Don't you see whose language you've come out with? That of Epicureans and debauchees! And then, while you do what they do and hold their judgments, you recite to us the words of Zeno and Socrates? Won't you throw as far away as you can the borrowed finery you deck yourself out in, which has nothing to do with you?

3.24.39 Or what else do those people want but to sleep without hindrance or compulsion, to get up and yawn at their leisure and wash their faces, then write and read whatever they like, then babble some nonsense or other and be praised by their friends for whatever they say, then go out for a stroll, and after a short walk take a bath, then eat, then go to bed—and as for the kind of bed such people are likely to sleep in, why say it? One can guess.

3.24.40 Come on, then, show me the way of life you're longing for, too, you zealot for truth and for Socrates and Diogenes! What do you want to do in Athens? These very things?

3.24.41 Nothing different? Then why do you call yourself a Stoic? And then, people who falsely claim Roman citizenship are punished severely, but those who falsely claim so great and solemn a calling and name should get off scot-free?

3.24.42 Or is that impossible? Isn't this the divine law, mighty and inescapable, that exacts the greatest punishments from those who commit the greatest wrongs?

3.24.43 For what does it say? "Let the one who lays claim to what has nothing to do with him be a braggart, be vain; let the one who disobeys the divine governance be abject, be a slave; let him grieve, let him envy, let him pity—and, to sum it all up, let him be unhappy, let him lament."

## VISITING THE POWERFUL

*One may call on the rich when duty requires it, but must never flatter them.*

3.24.44 What then? Do you want me to pay court to so-and-so? To go to his door? —If reason chooses this—for the sake of your country, your relatives, humanity—why shouldn't you go? You're not ashamed to go to the shoemaker's door when you need shoes, or to the gardener's when you need lettuces; but you are ashamed to go to the rich man's when you need something of the same sort?

3.24.45 —Yes, because I don't admire the shoemaker. —Then don't admire the rich man either. —And I won't flatter the gardener. —Then don't flatter the rich man either. —So how am I to get what I need?

3.24.46 —Did I tell you to go on the assumption that you'll get it? Didn't I tell you only to go so that you do what befits you?

3.24.47 —Then why do I still go? —So that you'll have gone, so that you'll have carried out the duties of a citizen, of a brother, of a friend.

3.24.48 And after that, remember that you've come to a shoemaker, a vegetable-seller, who has power over nothing great or

solemn, even if he sells it dear. You're going as if for lettuces: they cost an obol, not a talent.

3.24.49 So it is here, too. The matter is worth going to his door for: all right, I'll go. It's worth talking to him about: all right, I'll talk. But I also have to kiss his hand and flatter him with praise. Away with that! That costs a talent. It isn't in my interest, or the city's, or my friends', to lose both a good citizen and a friend.

3.24.50 But if you don't succeed, it'll look as if you weren't keen. Have you forgotten again why you went? Don't you know that a fine and good man does nothing for the sake of appearances, but for the sake of having acted well?

3.24.51 —Then what does he get out of acting well? —What does someone get out of writing the name "Dion" the way it should be written? The writing itself. —So there's no prize? —Are you looking for a greater prize for a good man than doing what is fine and just?

3.24.52 At Olympia nobody looks for anything more; you think it's enough to have won the Olympic crown. Does it seem so small and worthless to you to be fine and good and happy?

3.24.53 Brought into this city by the gods for these purposes, and already obliged to take on the work of a man, are you longing for nurses and mama? Do foolish women with their weeping bend you and make you soft? Will you never stop being a little child, a baby? Don't you know that someone who acts like a child is all the more ridiculous the older he is?

3.24.54 In Athens did you never see anyone when you went to his house? —Whoever I wanted. —Then here too, want to see this man, and you'll see whoever you want. Only not abjectly, not with desire or aversion, and all will be well with you.

3.24.55 And that doesn't lie in going, or in standing at his door, but within, in your judgments.

3.24.56 When you've come to hold external things, the things outside your choice, in contempt, and to regard none of them as yours, but only these as yours—judging well, forming opinions, having impulses, feeling desire and aversion—where is there

any room left for flattery, for abjectness? Why do you still long for the quiet life there, for your familiar places?

3.24.57 Wait a little, and these places will be familiar to you in their turn. And then, if you're so ignoble, weep and groan again when you have to leave these too.

3.24.58 How, then, am I to be affectionate? —As a noble person, as a fortunate one. For reason never chooses that you be abject, or broken down, or dependent on another, or ever blame God or man.

3.24.59 Be affectionate in this way, I tell you, as someone who will keep to these principles. But if this affection—whatever it is you call affection—is going to make you a slave and wretched, it doesn't pay to be affectionate.

3.24.60 And what's to stop you loving someone as a mortal, as someone who may go away? Didn't Socrates love his children? He did, but as a free man, as someone who remembered that his first duty was to be a friend to the gods.

3.24.61 That's why he never overstepped anything that befits a good man, whether in making his defense, or in proposing his penalty, or earlier, when he served on the Council or went on campaign.

3.24.62 But we're well supplied with every excuse for being ignoble: some because of a child, some because of a mother, others because of brothers.

3.24.63 But it's not fitting to be unfortunate because of anyone; rather, to be fortunate because of everyone, and above all because of God, who made us for this.

3.24.64 Come now, did Diogenes love no one—he who was so gentle and such a lover of humanity that he gladly took on so many labors and bodily hardships for the common good of mankind?

3.24.65 But how did he love? As a servant of Zeus should: caring, and at the same time submitting to God.

3.24.66 That's why the whole earth, and no particular place, was his fatherland—his alone. And when he was taken captive he didn't long for Athens or for his acquaintances and friends

there, but got on familiar terms with the pirates themselves and tried to reform them. And later, when he was sold, he lived in Corinth just as he had before in Athens; and if he'd gone off to the Perrhaebians, he'd have been just the same.[40]

3.24.67 That's how freedom comes about. That's why he used to say, "Ever since Antisthenes set me free, I've never been a slave."

3.24.68 How did he set him free? Listen to what he says: "He taught me what is mine and what is not mine. Property is not mine. Relatives, household, friends, reputation, familiar places, way of life—all these belong to others."

3.24.69 "'What, then, is yours? The use of impressions.' He showed me that I have this free from hindrance and compulsion: no one can obstruct me, no one can force me to use my impressions otherwise than as I want."

3.24.70 "So who has any power over me any more? Philip, or Alexander, or Perdiccas, or the Great King? How could they? For anyone who is going to be defeated by a human being must long before have been defeated by things."

3.24.71 So a man whom pleasure doesn't get the better of, nor pain, nor reputation, nor wealth, and who, whenever he sees fit, can spit his whole paltry body in someone's face and depart—whose slave is he any more? To whom is he subject?

3.24.72 But if he'd been living pleasantly in Athens and been overcome by that way of life, his affairs would have been at everyone's mercy, and anyone stronger than him would have had the power to cause him grief.

3.24.73 How do you think he'd have flattered the pirates to get them to sell him to some Athenian, so that he could see the beautiful Piraeus again one day, and the Long Walls, and the Acropolis?

3.24.74 And what would you be when you saw them, slave?

3.24.75 A slave, and abject. And what good would it do you? —No, a free man. —Show me how you're free. Look, someone or other has got hold of you—this fellow who's taking you away from

40 According to the story, Diogenes was captured by pirates and sold as a slave to a Corinthian. The Perrhaebians were a remote people of northern Thessaly.

your familiar way of life—and he says, "You're my slave. For it's up to me to prevent you from living as you want, up to me to let you off, to humble you. Whenever I want, you'll be cheerful again and go off to Athens walking on air."

3.24.76 What do you say to this man who's making you his slave? Whom do you offer him as the one who will set you free? Or can't you even look him in the face, but drop all your long speeches and beg to be let go?[41]

3.24.77 Man, you ought to go off to prison gladly, hurrying, getting there ahead of the men taking you away. And then you tell me you're reluctant to live in Rome, and you long for Greece? And when you have to die, will you weep all over us then too, because you won't see Athens and won't stroll in the Lyceum?

3.24.78 Is this what you went abroad for? Is this why you looked for someone to spend time with—to be benefited by him? What benefit? To analyze syllogisms more skillfully, or to work through hypothetical arguments? And for this reason you left brother, country, friends, household—to come back having learned these things?

3.24.79 So you didn't go abroad for the sake of steadiness, or of tranquility, or so that, having become immune to harm, you'd no longer blame anyone or accuse anyone, no one would wrong you, and you'd keep your relationships intact without hindrance?

3.24.80 A fine line of business you've gone into: syllogisms, and shifting arguments, and hypothetical ones! If you like, sit down in the marketplace and put up a sign, like the drug-sellers.

3.24.81 Won't you deny that you even know what you've learned, so as not to bring the doctrines into disrepute as useless? What harm has philosophy done you? What wrong has Chrysippus done you, that you should prove by your own conduct that his labors were useless? Weren't the troubles at home enough for you—all the causes of grief and mourning you had even if you hadn't gone abroad? Did you have to take on more?

41 In Roman law, a slave's freedom was claimed before a magistrate by a free third party who formally asserted it on his behalf.

3.24.82 And if you make other acquaintances and friends in turn, you'll have more reasons to lament; and so too if you become attached to another country. Why live at all, then? To wrap yourself in one grief after another, and be unhappy because of them?

3.24.83 And then you call this affection? What kind of affection, man? If it's good, it's never the cause of anything bad; if it's bad, I'll have nothing to do with it. I was born for my own goods; I wasn't born for evils.

### TRAINING AGAINST ATTACHMENT

*Remember that what you love is mortal, and hold yourself ready for any post God assigns.*

3.24.84 What, then, is the training for this? First, the highest and most important, and the one that stands right at the entrance, so to speak: whenever you become attached to something, don't treat it as something that can't be taken away, but as belonging to the same class as a pot or a glass cup, so that when it breaks you'll remember [indeed] and not be upset.

3.24.85 So too here: if you kiss your child, your brother, your friend, never give the impression free rein, and don't let your delight go as far as it wants. Pull it back, check it, like the men who stand behind generals in their triumphs and remind them that they are human.[42]

3.24.86 Remind yourself of something similar: that what you love is mortal, that nothing you love is your own. It's been given to you for the present, not irrevocably or forever, but like a fig or a bunch of grapes, at the appointed season of the year. And if you long for it in winter, you're a fool.

3.24.87 In the same way, if you long for your son or your friend when he isn't given to you, know that you're longing for a fig in winter. For as winter is to a fig, so is every circumstance that arises from the universe to the things it removes.

42 In a Roman triumph, a slave riding behind the victorious general is said to have reminded him that he was mortal.

3.24.88 And furthermore, in the very moments when you're taking delight in something, set the opposite impressions before yourself. What harm is there in whispering, while you kiss your child, "Tomorrow you'll die," and likewise to your friend, "Tomorrow you'll go away, or I will, and we'll never see each other again"?

3.24.89 —But these are words of ill omen. —So are some incantations; but because they help, I don't care—just let them help. But do you call anything ill-omened other than what signifies something bad?

3.24.90 Cowardice is ill-omened; so are meanness of spirit, mourning, grief, shamelessness. These are the words of ill omen. And yet we shouldn't hesitate to utter even these, if it helps us guard against the things themselves.

3.24.91 But you tell me a word is ill-omened when it signifies something natural? Then call it ill-omened, too, that the ears of grain are harvested, since it signifies the destruction of the ears —but not of the universe. Call it ill-omened that leaves fall, that a fresh fig turns into a dried one, and grapes into raisins.

3.24.92 For all these are changes of earlier states into others: not destruction, but a certain ordered management and governance. That's what going away is, [and] a small change;

3.24.93 that's what death is: a greater change, from what now is, not into what is not, but into what now is not.

3.24.94 —So I'll no longer exist? —You won't; but something else will, something the universe now needs. For you, too, came into being not when you wanted, but when the universe had need of you.

3.24.95 That's why the fine and good man, remembering who he is, and where he has come from, and by whom he was made, concerns himself with this alone: how to fill his own place in good order and in obedience to God.

3.24.96 "Do you want me to go on existing? Then I will, as a free man, as a noble one, as you wanted; for you made me free from hindrance in what is my own."

3.24.97 "But you have no more need of me? May all be well with you. Up till now I stayed because of you and no one else, and now, in obedience to you, I depart."

3.24.98 "How do you depart?" "Again, as you wanted: as a free man, as your servant, as one who has understood your commands and your prohibitions."

3.24.99 "And as long as I'm spending my time in your service, what do you want me to be? A ruler or a private citizen, a senator or a commoner, a soldier or a general, a teacher or the head of a household? Whatever post and station you entrust to me, as Socrates says, I'll die ten thousand times before I abandon it."

3.24.100 "And where do you want me to be? In Rome, or Athens, or Thebes, or Gyara? Only remember me there."

3.24.101 "If you send me somewhere where people can't live in accordance with nature, I'll depart, not in disobedience to you, but as though you were sounding the retreat for me. I'm not deserting you—heaven forbid!—but I see that you have no need of me."

3.24.102 "But if a life in accordance with nature is granted to me, I won't look for any other place than the one I'm in, or any other people than the ones I'm with."

3.24.103 Keep these thoughts at hand night and day. Write them, read them, make them the subject of your conversations, with yourself and with another: "Can you help me with this?" And then go to another person, and another.

3.24.104 Then, if one of the things people call unwelcome happens, the first thing that will immediately lighten it for you is that it wasn't unexpected.

3.24.105 For in every case it's a great thing to be able to say, "I knew that my son was mortal." For that's how you'll say, "I knew I was mortal," "I knew I might have to leave home," "I knew I might be banished,"[43]

3.24.106 "I knew I might be sent off to prison." And then, if you turn inward and look for the region the event comes from, you'll

43 The first saying was attributed to the philosopher Anaxagoras on hearing of his son's death.

immediately remember: "It comes from the region of things outside my choice, the things that aren't mine. So what is it to me?" And then the most decisive question of all: "And who has sent it?"

3.24.107 The ruler, or the general, the city, the city's law. "Then give it to me; for I must always obey the law in everything."

3.24.108 Then, when the impression stings you (for that isn't up to you), fight back with reason, wrestle it down; don't let it gain strength, or lead on to what comes next, picturing whatever it wants, however it wants.

3.24.109 If you're on Gyara, don't picture your life in Rome, and all the pleasures you had when you lived there, and all you'd have if you went back. Set your mind there on this: how someone living on Gyara ought to live on Gyara with courage. And if you're in Rome, don't picture your life in Athens; practice only your life where you are.

3.24.110 Then, in place of all other pleasures, bring in that one which comes from being aware that you're obeying God, that you're doing the work of a fine and good man not in word but in deed.

3.24.111 For what a thing it is to be able to say to yourself: "Now what the others hold forth about so solemnly in the schools, and are thought to be spouting paradoxes about, I am actually carrying out. They sit there expounding my excellences, and inquiring into me, and singing my praises;"

3.24.112 "And Zeus wanted me to get the proof of this from myself, and wanted to find out for himself whether he has the right kind of soldier, the right kind of citizen, and to bring me forward before other people as a witness about the things outside our choice: 'See, you're afraid for no reason, and you desire what you desire in vain. Don't look for good things outside; look for them in yourselves. Otherwise you won't find them.'"

3.24.113 "For this purpose he now brings me here and now sends me there; he shows me to mankind poor, without office, sick; he sends me off to Gyara, he puts me in prison. Not because he hates me—heaven forbid! Who hates the best of his servants?

Nor because he neglects me, he who doesn't neglect even the smallest thing; but because he's training me and using me as a witness to the others."

3.24.114 "Appointed to such a service, am I still to worry about where I am, or whom I'm with, or what people say about me? Am I not wholly intent on God, and on his commands and orders?"

3.24.115 If you always have these thoughts in hand, and rub them in by yourself, and keep them ready for use, you'll never need anyone to comfort you or to strengthen you.

3.24.116 For what's shameful isn't having nothing to eat, but not having reason enough to keep you free from fear and grief.

3.24.117 And once you've secured freedom from grief and fear, will there be any tyrant for you any more, or bodyguard, or members of Caesar's household? Will some appointment sting you, or the people offering sacrifice on the Capitol for their commissions—you who have received so great an office from Zeus?[44]

3.24.118 Only don't parade it or boast about it; show it by what you do. And even if nobody notices, be content to be healthy and happy yourself.

## CHAPTER 25: TO THOSE WHO FALL SHORT OF THEIR PURPOSES

*Those who fall short of their aims can always start the contest again.*

3.25.1 Consider which of the things you set out to do at the start you've mastered and which you haven't; how it cheers you to remember some of them and pains you to remember others; and, if possible, recover the ones that have slipped from your grasp.

3.25.2 For those engaged in the greatest of contests mustn't shrink from it; they must be ready to take blows, too.

3.25.3 For the contest before us isn't about wrestling or the pancratium, where, whether you win or not, you may be worth a

great deal or very little—and, by Zeus, may be very fortunate or very miserable. It's about good fortune and happiness itself.

3.25.4 What then? Even if we give up here, no one stops us from competing again, and we don't have to wait another four years for the next Olympics. As soon as you've recovered and pulled yourself together and bring the same eagerness, you can compete. And if you give up again, you can compete again; and if you win just once, you're like someone who has never given up.

3.25.5 Only don't start doing the same thing gladly out of sheer habit, and then go round the whole circuit like a bad athlete, getting beaten, like quails that have run away from the fight.

3.25.6 "The impression of a pretty girl gets the better of me. So what? Didn't it get the better of me the other day?" "I feel an urge to criticize someone. Well, didn't I criticize someone the other day?"

3.25.7 You talk to us as though you'd come out of it unscathed—as if a man whose doctor had forbidden him to bathe were to say, "Well, didn't I bathe the other day?" Suppose the doctor could say to him, "Come on, then: after you bathed, what happened to you? Didn't you get a fever? Didn't you get a headache?"

3.25.8 And you, when you criticized someone the other day, weren't you acting like a malicious person? Like a babbler? Didn't you feed this habit of yours by throwing it the deeds that belong to it? And when the girl got the better of you, did you get away unscathed? So why talk about the other day?

3.25.9 You ought, I think, to remember, the way slaves remember their beatings, and keep away from the same faults.

3.25.10 But it isn't the same. There the pain produces the memory; but with faults, what pain is there, what penalty? For when did you ever get into the habit of avoiding acting badly?

44 Epictetus uses Latin terms: an *ordinatio* is an appointment to office, and the *optikia* are posts such as that of *optio* (a junior officer), for which the successful gave thank-offerings on the Capitol.

## CHAPTER 26: TO THOSE WHO FEAR WANT

*A student afraid of want is shamed by runaway slaves and reminded that God provides.*

3.26.1 Aren't you ashamed to be more cowardly and ignoble than runaway slaves? How do they leave their masters when they run away? What estates, what servants do they rely on? Don't they steal a little, just enough for the first few days, and then make their way over land or even sea, contriving one means after another of keeping themselves fed?

3.26.2 And what runaway slave ever died of hunger? But you tremble in case you run short of the necessities, and lie awake at night.

3.26.3 You poor wretch, are you so blind that you don't see the road that the lack of necessities leads to? Where does it lead? Where fever leads, too, and a falling stone: to death. Haven't you often said this yourself to your companions? Haven't you read a lot of this sort of thing, and written a lot? And how often have you boasted that where death at least is concerned you're in reasonable shape?

3.26.4 —Yes, but my family will go hungry too. —So what? Does their hunger lead somewhere else? Isn't there the same road down?

3.26.5 The same world below? So won't you look there with confidence in the face of every want and lack—there where the richest men, and those who have held the highest offices, and kings and tyrants themselves have to go down: you hungry, perhaps, if that's how it turns out, and they bursting from indigestion and drunkenness?

3.26.6 What beggar have you ever easily found who wasn't old? Who wasn't extremely old? And yet, freezing night and day, thrown down on the ground, eating only the bare necessities, they come close to not even being able to die;

3.26.7 and you, a sound man, with hands and feet, are so afraid of hunger? Can't you draw water, write, look after children,

guard someone else's door? —But it's shameful to be reduced to that necessity. —Then first learn what things are shameful, and after that call yourself a philosopher in front of us. For now, don't allow it even if someone else calls you one.

3.26.8 Is something shameful for you that isn't your own doing, that you aren't responsible for, that just happened to you, like a headache, like a fever? If your parents were poor, or were rich but left others as their heirs, and give you no help while they're alive, is that shameful for you?

3.26.9 Is that what you learned from the philosophers? Did you never hear that what is shameful is blameworthy, and what is blameworthy deserves to be blamed? And whom do we blame for what isn't his own doing, for what he didn't do himself?

3.26.10 So did you make your father what he is? Or is it in your power to reform him? Is that granted to you? What then? Should you want what isn't granted, or be ashamed when you don't get it?

3.26.11 And is this the habit you got into while you were studying philosophy—looking to others and hoping for nothing from yourself?

3.26.12 Well then, groan and lament, and eat in fear that you won't have food tomorrow. Tremble over your wretched slaves, in case one of them steals something, or runs away, or dies.

3.26.13 Live like that, and never stop—you who came to philosophy in name only, and have disgraced its doctrines as far as you could, by showing them to be useless and unprofitable to those who take them up. You never set your desire on steadiness, tranquility, freedom from passion. You never attended anyone for that purpose, though you attended many for the sake of syllogisms. You never put any of these impressions to the test by yourself—"Can I bear it or can't I? What remains for me to do?" —

3.26.14 but, as though everything were fine and secure with you, you busied yourself with the last topic, the one about being unshakable—so that you could hold what unshakably? Your cowardice, your meanness of spirit, your admiration of the rich,

your desire that doesn't get what it wants, your aversion that falls into what it avoids. These are what you were worried about keeping secure.

3.26.15 Shouldn't you first have gained something from reason, and then made that secure? Whoever saw anyone building a coping all the way round and putting it on no wall at all? And what doorkeeper is posted at no door?

3.26.16 But you practice being able to demonstrate—what? You practice not being shaken by sophisms—shaken from what?

3.26.17 Show me first what you're guarding, what you're measuring or weighing; then, and only then, show off your scales or your grain-measure.

3.26.18 Or how long will you go on measuring ashes? Isn't it these things you ought to be demonstrating: what makes people happy, what makes their affairs go as they want, what makes it unnecessary to blame anyone or accuse anyone, and how to obey the governance of the universe? Show me these.

3.26.19 "Look, I'm showing you," he says. "I'll analyze syllogisms for you." That's the measuring instrument, slave! It isn't the thing measured.

3.26.20 That's why you're now paying the penalty for what you neglected [of philosophy]: you tremble, you lie awake, you take advice from everyone; and if your plans aren't going to please everyone, you think you've planned badly.

3.26.21 And then you're afraid of hunger, so you think. But it isn't hunger you're afraid of. You're afraid you won't have a cook, won't have someone else to buy your food, someone else to put on your shoes, someone else to dress you, others to give you your massage, others to follow you around,

3.26.22 so that in the baths you can strip and stretch yourself out like a crucified man and be rubbed down on this side and that, with the trainer standing over you saying, "Move over, give me his side, you take his head, hand me his shoulder"; and then, when you've come home from the baths, you can shout, "Isn't anyone bringing me something to eat?"

3.26.23 and then, "Clear the tables," "Wipe them down." That's what you're afraid of: not being able to live the life of an invalid. As for the life of the healthy, learn it: how slaves live, how workmen live, how genuine philosophers live, how Socrates lived—and he with a wife and children—how Diogenes lived, how Cleanthes lived, studying and drawing water at the same time.[45]

3.26.24 If you want to have that, you'll have it everywhere, and you'll live with confidence. Confidence in what? In the only thing one can have confidence in: what is trustworthy, unhindered, and can't be taken away—that is, your own choice.

3.26.25 Why have you made yourself so useless and unprofitable that no one wants to take you into his house, no one wants to look after you? When a sound and useful vessel has been thrown out, anyone who finds it will pick it up and count it a gain; but no one will pick you up, and everyone will count you a loss.

3.26.26 So you can't even do the job of a dog or a rooster. Then why do you still want to live, being what you are?

3.26.27 Is a good man afraid that he'll run out of food? The blind don't run out, the lame don't run out; will a good man run out? A good soldier doesn't lack someone to pay him, nor does a workman or a shoemaker; and will the good man lack it?

3.26.28 Does God neglect his own handiwork like that—his servants, his witnesses, the only ones he uses as examples to the uneducated, to show that he exists, and governs the universe well, and doesn't neglect human affairs, and that nothing bad happens to a good man either in life or in death?

3.26.29 —What, then, when he doesn't provide food? —What else can it mean but that, like a good general, he has sounded the retreat for me? I obey, I follow, praising my commander and singing hymns to his works.

3.26.30 For I came when he saw fit, and I go away again when he sees fit. And while I was alive this was my work: to sing hymns to God, by myself, and to one person, and to many.

3.26.31 He doesn't give me much, or in abundance; he doesn't want me to live in luxury. He didn't give that to Heracles either,

45 Cleanthes supported himself while studying by drawing water at night.

his own son. Someone else was king of Argos and Mycenae, while Heracles took orders, and toiled, and trained.

3.26.32 And Eurystheus, being what he was, was king neither of Argos nor of Mycenae, since he wasn't even king of himself. Heracles, on the other hand, was ruler and leader of every land and sea, purger of injustice and lawlessness, bringer of justice and holiness. And he did all this naked and alone.

3.26.33 And Odysseus, when he was cast ashore after his shipwreck, did his helplessness humble him at all, did it break him at all? No: how did he go up to the girls to ask for the bare necessities, the very things it's thought most shameful to have to beg from someone else? "Like a lion reared in the mountains." Trusting in what?[46]

3.26.34 Not in reputation, or money, or office, but in his own strength—that is, in his judgments about what is up to us and what is not.

3.26.35 For these are the only things that make people free, that make them unhindered, that lift the necks of the humbled, that make them look the rich and the tyrants straight in the eye.

3.26.36 And this was the philosopher's gift. And you won't go out with confidence, but trembling all over for your bits of clothing and your bits of silver? Poor wretch, is this how you've wasted all your time up to now?

3.26.37 What, then, if I fall ill? —You'll be ill well. —Who'll take care of me? —God, your friends. —I'll lie on a hard bed. —But like a man. —I won't have suitable lodging. —Then you'll be ill in lodging that isn't suitable. —Who'll provide my keep? —The people who provide it for others too. You'll be ill like Manes. —And what's the end of the illness?[47]

3.26.38 —What else but death? Don't you realize, then, that the chief of all evils for a human being, the source of all meanness of spirit and cowardice, is not death but rather the fear of death?

46 In Homer's *Odyssey* (Book 6) the naked, shipwrecked Odysseus approaches the princess Nausicaa and her maids; the lion simile is Homer's.
47 Manes was a typical name for a slave.

3.26.39 So train yourself against this, I tell you. Let all your reasoning, your exercises, your reading tend in this direction, and you'll know that this is the only way human beings become free.

# Book IV

*Freedom; how to live with others; tranquillity; fearlessness; what to despise and what to care for.*

## CHAPTER 1: ΠΕΡΙ ἐΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑΣ

4.1.1 Free is the person who lives as he wishes, who can be neither compelled nor hindered nor forced, whose impulses are unimpeded, whose desires get what they aim at, whose aversions never meet what they're averse to.

4.1.2 Who, then, wants to live in error? —No one. —Who wants to live deceived, rash, unjust, undisciplined, grumbling at his lot, abject?

4.1.3 —No one. —So no bad person lives as he wishes; and so no bad person is free either.

4.1.4 And who wants to live in grief, in fear, in envy, in pity, desiring and failing to get, averse to things and falling into them?

4.1.5 —Not a single person. —Do we have any bad person, then, who is free of grief, free of fear, who never falls into what he's averse to and never fails to get what he desires? —Not one. —Then not a free one either.

4.1.6 If a man who has been consul twice hears this, he'll forgive you—provided you add, "But you, of course, are a wise man; none of this applies to you."

4.1.7 But if you tell him the truth—"When it comes to being a slave yourself, you're no different from people who've been sold three times over"—what else can you expect but a beating?

4.1.8 "How can I be a slave?" he says. "My father was free, my mother was free, nobody holds a bill of sale for me. What's

more, I'm a senator, and a friend of Caesar, and I've been consul, and I own lots of slaves."

4.1.9 In the first place, my excellent senator, perhaps your father too was a slave, in the very same slavery, and your mother, and your grandfather, and all your ancestors one after another.

4.1.10 But even if they were as free as can be, what's that to you? What if they were noble and you are base? They fearless and you a coward? They self-controlled and you undisciplined?

4.1.11 "And what," he says, "does that have to do with being a slave?" —Doesn't doing something against your will, under compulsion, groaning, seem to you to have anything to do with being a slave?

4.1.12 —All right, grant that, he says. But who can compel me, except Caesar, the lord of all?

4.1.13 —So even you have admitted that you have one master. And don't take any comfort from the fact that he is, as you say, the common master of everyone: recognize that you're a slave in a large household.

4.1.14 That's how the people of Nicopolis too like to shout, "By Caesar's fortune, we are free!"

4.1.15 Still, if you like, let's leave Caesar aside for the moment, and tell me this: have you never been in love with anyone? A girl, a boy, a slave, a free person?

4.1.16 —What does that have to do with being a slave or free?

4.1.17 —Were you never ordered by the woman you loved to do something you didn't want to do? Did you never flatter your pet slave? Never kiss the slave's feet? And yet if someone forces you to kiss Caesar's, you consider it an outrage and the height of tyranny.

4.1.18 What else, then, is slavery? Did you never go out at night where you didn't want to go? Spend more than you wanted? Say things moaning and groaning, put up with being abused, with being shut out?

4.1.19 But if you're ashamed to admit your own experiences, look at what Thrasonides says and does—a man who had served

on as many campaigns as perhaps even you haven't. First, he has gone out at night, when Getas doesn't dare go out; no, if Getas were made to go by him, he'd have gone out with a lot of shouting and bewailing of his bitter slavery.[1]

4.1.20 Then what does he say? "A cheap little girl," he says, "has made a slave of me, / me, whom no enemy ever did."

4.1.21 Poor wretch—a slave of a girl, and a cheap girl at that! Why do you still call yourself free, then? Why do you keep bringing up your campaigns?

4.1.22 Then he asks for a sword, and gets angry with the man who, out of goodwill, won't give it to him, and sends gifts to the woman who hates him, and begs and weeps; and then again, when he has a bit of luck, he's elated. But even then, how?

4.1.23 not to desire or to fear—nor freedom.[2]

### FREEDOM AND SLAVERY

*Caged animals, freedmen and senators show that outward liberty and rank do not make anyone free.*

4.1.24 Look at animals, and see how we use the concept of freedom.

4.1.25 People keep tame lions shut up, and feed them, and some take them around with them. And who will call such a lion free? Isn't it true that the softer its life, the more slavish it is? And what lion, if it acquired sense and reason, would want to be one of those lions?

4.1.26 Come now, these birds: when they're caught and kept shut up and fed, what do they go through trying to escape? Some of them even starve to death rather than endure that kind of life,

4.1.27 and those that do survive barely hang on, with difficulty, wasting away—and if they find the slightest opening, they're out.

1 Thrasonides is the soldier-lover in Menander's comedy *The Man She Hated*; Getas is his slave.

2 The Greek is damaged here; the sense seems to be that even at his happiest he hasn't learned to be free of desire and fear, and so hasn't got freedom.

That's how much they long for their natural freedom, for living on their own terms, unhindered.

4.1.28 And what's bad for you here? "What a thing to say! It's my nature to fly where I want, to live in the open air, to sing when I want. You take all this away from me and ask, 'What's bad for you here?'"

4.1.29 That's why we'll call free only those creatures that don't tolerate captivity, but, as soon as they're caught, escape by dying.

4.1.30 So Diogenes too says somewhere that the one device for securing freedom is to die cheerfully; and he writes to the king of the Persians: "You can't enslave the city of Athens," he says, "any more than you can the fish."

4.1.31 "How so? Won't I catch them?" "If you catch them," he says, "they'll leave you and be gone at once, just like the fish." And it's true: whichever of the fish you catch dies. And if these people too die when they're caught, what good is all your preparation to you?

4.1.32 That's the voice of a free man, who has examined the matter seriously and, as you'd expect, found the answer. But if you look for it somewhere other than where it is, is it any wonder if you never find it?

4.1.33 The slave immediately prays to be set free. Why? Do you think it's because he's longing to pay money to the collectors of the five-percent tax? No: it's because he imagines that up to now, for lack of it, he's been hampered and his life hasn't flowed smoothly.

4.1.34 "If I'm set free," he says, "everything flows smoothly at once. I don't pay attention to anyone, I talk to everyone as an equal, on the same footing, I go where I want, I come from where I want and go where I want."

4.1.35 Then he's freed, and straight away, having nowhere to eat, he looks for someone to flatter, someone to dine with. Then either he works with his body and suffers the most dreadful things—and if he finds himself a manger, he has fallen into a slavery much harsher

4.1.36 than the first; or even if he gets rich, being a man without taste he falls for some girl, and when things go badly he weeps and longs for his slavery again.

4.1.37 "What was wrong with me? Someone else clothed me, someone else shod me, someone else fed me, someone else nursed me when I was sick; I did a few little jobs for him. But now, poor me, what I go through, a slave to many instead of one!"

4.1.38 "Still," he says, "if I get the gold rings, then I'll live most smoothly and happily of all." First, to get them, he suffers what he deserves; then, once he has them, the same all over again.[3]

4.1.39 Then he says, "If I serve in the army, I'm rid of all my troubles." He serves, he suffers everything a slave who's fit for the whip does, and nonetheless asks for a second campaign, and a third.

4.1.40 Then, when he puts the finishing touch on it all and becomes a senator, then he becomes a slave as he walks into the Senate; then he serves the finest and sleekest slavery of all.

4.1.41 To stop being a fool, he needs to learn what Socrates used to talk about—what each thing is—and not apply his preconceptions at random to particular realities.

4.1.42 For this is the cause of all people's evils: not being able to apply their common preconceptions to particular cases.

4.1.43 But we each think it's something different. One thinks it's because he's ill. Not at all—it's because he doesn't apply his preconceptions. Another thinks it's because he's poor, another because he has a harsh father or mother, another because Caesar isn't gracious to him. But this is one thing and one thing only: not knowing how to apply one's preconceptions.

4.1.44 For who doesn't have a preconception of what's bad—that it's harmful, that it's to be avoided, that it's to be got rid of by every means? One preconception doesn't conflict with another; the conflict comes when it's a matter of applying them.

4.1.45 What, then, is this bad thing, harmful and to be avoided? One man says it's not being Caesar's friend. He's gone off track,

he's missed the right application, he's in distress, he's looking for things that have nothing to do with the matter at hand. Because even when he has managed to become Caesar's friend, he still hasn't got what he was looking for.

4.1.46 For what is it that every human being seeks? To be steady, to be happy, to do everything as he wishes, not to be hindered, not to be compelled. Well then, when he becomes Caesar's friend, has he stopped being hindered, stopped being compelled? Is he steady, does his life flow smoothly? Whom shall we ask? Whom do we have more trustworthy than this very man who has become his friend?

4.1.47 Come forward and tell us: when did you sleep more free of disturbance—now, or before you became Caesar's friend? At once you hear: "Stop, for the gods' sake, making fun of my fortune! You don't know what I go through, poor me. Sleep doesn't even come to me; somebody comes in and says he's already awake, he's already coming out. Then disturbances, then worries."

4.1.48 Come, when did you dine more contentedly, now or before? Listen to what he says about this too: if he's not invited, it hurts, and if he is invited, he dines like a slave at his master's table, the whole time watching out that he doesn't say or do anything foolish. And what do you think he's afraid of? Of being whipped like a slave? How could he get off that lightly? No—as befits so great a man, a friend of Caesar, he's afraid of losing his head.

4.1.49 When did you bathe more free of disturbance? When did you exercise more at your leisure? In short, which life would you rather live, the one now or the one then?

4.1.50 I can swear that no one is so insensible or so untruthful as not to lament his misfortunes all the more, the closer a friend he is.

4.1.51 When, then, neither the so-called kings live as they wish nor the friends of kings, who is still free? —Seek and you'll find.

3 The gold ring marked admission to the equestrian order, the rank below the senate.

For you have starting points from nature for finding the truth. But if you can't find the next step by yourself, proceeding from these alone, listen to those who have done the searching.

4.1.52 What do they say? Does freedom seem to you a good? —The greatest. —Can anyone who attains the greatest good be unhappy or fare badly? —No. —So whenever you see people unhappy, their lives not flowing smoothly, grieving, declare with confidence that they are not free. —I do.

4.1.53 —So we've now left behind buying and selling and that kind of classification by ownership. For if you were right to agree to this, then if the Great King is unhappy, he wouldn't be free, nor would a petty king, nor a man of consular rank, nor a man who has been consul twice. —Granted.

4.1.54 Answer me this too, then: does freedom seem to you something great and noble and valuable? —Of course. —Is it possible, then, for someone who attains something so great and valuable and noble to be abject? —It isn't.

4.1.55 —So when you see someone cringing before another, or flattering him against his own judgment, say with confidence that this man too isn't free; and not only if he does it for a little dinner, but even if he does it for a governorship or a consulship. But call those who do it for small things little slaves, and these others, as they deserve, big slaves.

4.1.56 —Granted, that too. —And does freedom seem to you something self-governing and independent? —Of course. —Then anyone whom it's in another's power to hinder and compel, say with confidence that he isn't free.

4.1.57 And please don't look at his grandfathers and great-grandfathers or go looking for a bill of sale. If you hear him say "master" from the heart, with feeling, then even if twelve rods go before him, call him a slave. If you hear him say, "Poor me, what I'm going through!", call him a slave. In short, if you see him wailing, complaining, his life not flowing smoothly, call him a slave in a purple-bordered toga.[4]

4 A consul was preceded by twelve attendants carrying the rods of office (the fasces); the purple-bordered toga marked senior magistrates.

4.1.58 So if he does none of these things, don't call him free yet; find out what his judgments are, whether there's anything in them that's compelled, anything that hinders, anything that disturbs the flow of his life. And if you find something like that, call him a slave on holiday at the Saturnalia; say his master is away. Then he'll come back, and you'll see what the man goes through.

4.1.59 —Who'll come back? —Anyone who has the power to secure or take away any of the things he wants. —Do we have that many masters, then? —That many. For before these, we have things themselves as our masters, and those are many. And because of this, those who have power over any of those things must necessarily be our masters too.

4.1.60 since, you see, nobody fears Caesar himself, but death, exile, confiscation of property, prison, disgrace. Nor does anyone love Caesar, unless he happens to be a man of real worth; we love wealth, a tribuneship, a praetorship, a consulship. When we love and hate and fear these things, those who have power over them must be our masters. That's why we even worship them as gods;

4.1.61 for we assume that whatever has power over the greatest benefit is divine; and then we wrongly add the minor premise, "This man has [the greatest benefit; it is divine. And then we wrongly add the minor premise, This man has] power over the greatest benefit." The conclusion drawn from these premises must necessarily be wrong too.

### WHAT MAKES US FREE

*Only knowing what is ours and what is not makes a person unhindered and free.*

4.1.62 What is it, then, that makes a person unhindered and self-governing? Wealth doesn't, nor a consulship, nor a governorship, nor a kingdom; something else has to be found.

4.1.63 What is it, then, that makes you unhindered and unimpeded in writing? —The knowledge of writing. —And in playing

the lyre? —The knowledge of playing the lyre. —So in living too, it's the knowledge of living.

4.1.64 You've heard it, then, in general terms; now look at it in particular cases too. Can someone who aims at something that is up to others be unhindered? —No. —Can he be unimpeded?

4.1.65 —No. —Then he can't be free either. So consider: do we have nothing that is up to us alone, or is everything up to us, or are some things up to us and others up to others?

4.1.66 —What do you mean? —When you want your body to be whole, is that up to you or not? —Not up to me. —And when you want it healthy? —Not that either. —And beautiful? —Not that either. —And to live or die? —Not that either. —So your body isn't your own; it's answerable to anyone stronger.

4.1.67 —Granted. —And is it up to you to have your farm when you want, for as long as you want, and in the condition you want? —No. —And your slaves? —No. —Your clothes? —No. —Your house? —No. —Your horses? —None of these. —And if you want your children to live no matter what, or your wife, or your brother, or your friends, is that up to you? —Not that either.

4.1.68 Do you have nothing self-governing, then, nothing that is up to you alone, or do you have something of that kind? —I don't know. —Then look at it this way and consider it.

4.1.69 Can anyone make you assent to what's false? —No one. —So in the domain of assent you're unhindered and unimpeded.

4.1.70 —Granted. —Come now, can anyone compel you to have an impulse toward what you don't want? —He can. When he threatens me with death or chains, he compels me to have an impulse. —Well then, if you despise dying and being in chains, do you still pay any attention to him?

4.1.71 —No. —So is despising death your own work, or not? —Mine. —So having an impulse is yours too, isn't it? —All right, it's mine. —And repulsion—whose is that?

4.1.72 That's yours too. —What, then, if I have an impulse to go for a walk and someone hinders me? —What of yours will he hinder? Your assent? —No, my poor body. —Yes, as he would a stone. —Granted; but I'm no longer walking.

4.1.73 —And who told you, "Walking is your own work, and can't be hindered"? What I said couldn't be hindered was only having the impulse. Where you need the body and its cooperation, you heard long ago that nothing there is yours.

4.1.74 —Granted, that too. —Can anyone compel you to desire what you don't want? —No one. —Or to purpose something, or to plan something, or in general to use the impressions that come to you?

4.1.75 —Not that either. But when I desire something, he'll hinder me from getting what I desire. —If you desire something that is yours and can't be hindered, how will he hinder you? —He can't at all. —Then who tells you that someone who desires what isn't his own is unhindered?

4.1.76 So I shouldn't desire health? —Not at all; nor anything else that isn't your own.

4.1.77 For whatever it isn't up to you to procure or keep when you want, that isn't your own. Keep far from it not only your hands but, long before that, your desire. Otherwise you've handed yourself over as a slave, you've put your neck under the yoke, if you admire [any] of the things that aren't yours, whichever of the mortal things that answer to others you set your heart on. —Isn't my hand mine?

4.1.78 —It's a part of you, but by nature it's clay, subject to hindrance and compulsion, the slave of anything stronger.

4.1.79 And why do I say your hand? You should treat your whole body like a loaded-up little donkey, for as long as it's possible, for as long as it's granted. And if it's requisitioned and a soldier grabs it, let it go; don't resist or grumble. Otherwise you'll take a beating and lose the donkey anyway.[5]

4.1.80 And when this is how you must treat the body, consider what's left for the other things that are acquired for the body's sake. When the body is a little donkey, the other things become the donkey's little bridles, little packsaddles, little shoes, its bar-

5 Roman soldiers had the right to commandeer civilians' animals and labor for transport.

ley, its fodder. Let those go too; release them faster and more cheerfully than the donkey.

4.1.81 And once you've made this preparation and gone through this training—distinguishing what isn't yours from what is, what can be hindered from what can't, regarding the one as your concern and the other as not, keeping your desire carefully fixed on the one, and your aversion there too—do you still fear anyone?

4.1.82 —No one. —For what would you fear for? For what is yours, where the essence of good and bad lies for you? And who has power over these things? Who can take them away, who can impede them? No more than anyone can God.

4.1.83 Or for your body and your property? For what isn't yours? For what's nothing to you? And what else were you practicing from the start but to distinguish what's yours and what isn't, what is up to you and what is not up to you, what can be hindered and what can't? And why did you come to the philosophers? So that you could be just as unfortunate and miserable as before?

4.1.84 So in this way you'll be free of fear and free of disturbance. And what is grief to you? For what we fear when it's expected, we grieve over when it's present. And what will you still desire? For the things within your choice, since they are fine and present, you have a measured and settled desire; and of the things outside your choice you desire none—so where is there room for that irrational element, pushy and rushing beyond all measure?

4.1.85 When, then, this is your attitude to things, what human being can still be frightening? What does one human being have that's frightening to another, in his looks or his talk or his company in general? No more than a horse to a horse, a dog to a dog, or a bee to a bee. No, it's things that are frightening to each of us; and when someone is able to secure them for someone or take them away, then he too becomes frightening.

## TEARING DOWN THE CITADEL

*The tyrants within us are overthrown by judgments, not by force.*

4.1.86 How, then, is a citadel destroyed? Not with iron or fire, but with judgments. For if we tear down the one in the city, have we also torn down the citadel of fever, the citadel of pretty women—in short, the citadel within us—and thrown out the tyrants within us, whom we have over every single thing every day, sometimes the same ones, sometimes others?

4.1.87 No, it's here we must begin, here we must tear down the citadel and throw out the tyrants: give up the poor body, its parts, its faculties, possessions, reputation, offices, honors, children, brothers, friends—regard all these as not our own.

4.1.88 And if the tyrants are thrown out of here, why should I still lay siege to the citadel, as far as I'm concerned? What does it do to me by standing? Why should I still throw out the bodyguards? Where do I feel them? It's against others that they carry their rods and their pikes and their swords.

4.1.89 I have never been hindered when I wanted something, nor compelled when I didn't. And how is that possible? I've attached my impulse to God. He wants me to have a fever; I want it too. He wants me to have an impulse toward something; I want it too. He wants me to desire; I want it too. He wants me to get something; I wish it too.

4.1.90 He doesn't want it; I don't wish it. So I want to die; so I want to be tortured. Who can still hinder me against my own judgment, or compel me? No more than anyone can Zeus.

4.1.91 That's what the more cautious travelers do too. One of them has heard that the road is infested with robbers; he doesn't dare set out alone, but waits for a company—an envoy's, or a quaestor's, or a proconsul's—and, attaching himself to it, he travels through safely.

4.1.92 The sensible person does the same in the world. There are many robber bands, tyrants, storms, hardships, losses of those dearest to us.

4.1.93 "Where can one take refuge? How can one get through without being robbed? What company should one wait for, to get through safely? To whom should one attach oneself?"

4.1.94 "To so-and-so, the rich man, the man of consular rank? And what good is that to me? He himself gets stripped, groans, grieves. And what if my fellow traveler himself turns on me and becomes my robber?"

4.1.95 "What shall I do? I'll become a friend of Caesar; if I'm his companion, no one will wrong me. First, to become one, how much must I endure and suffer, how often and by how many people must I be robbed! Then, if I do become one, he too is mortal [he too is mortal]."

4.1.96 "And if he himself, through some turn of events, becomes my enemy, is it better to withdraw somewhere?"

4.1.97 "Into the wilderness? Come now, doesn't fever get there too? What's to become of me, then? Isn't it possible to find a safe traveling companion, trustworthy, strong, beyond the reach of treachery?"

4.1.98 In this way he stops to reflect, and realizes that if he attaches himself to God, he will get through safely.

4.1.99 What do you mean, attach himself? —That whatever God wants, he wants too, and whatever God doesn't want, he doesn't want either.

4.1.100 —How, then, is that to come about? —How else but by examining God's impulses and his governance? What has he given me as my own and self-governing, and what has he kept for himself? He has given me the things within my choice, he has made them up to me, unimpeded, unhindered. The body of clay—how could he make that unhindered? So he subjected it to the cycle of the universe, along with my property, my furniture, my house, my children, my wife.

4.1.101 Why, then, do I fight against God? Why do I want what's not mine to want—to have at all costs what hasn't been given to me? How should I have them, then? As they've been given, and for as long as possible. But the one who gave them takes them

away. Why, then, do I resist? I don't just say I'll be a fool, trying to force one who is stronger; even before that, I'll be unjust.

4.1.102 For where did I get these things when I came into the world? My father gave them to me. And who gave them to him? And who made the sun, who the fruits of the earth, who the seasons, who the bond and fellowship between people?

4.1.103 And then, having received everything from another, even your very self, you get angry and blame the giver if he takes something away from you?

4.1.104 Who are you, and what did you come here for? Wasn't it he who brought you into the world? Wasn't it he who showed you the light? Didn't he give you fellow workers? And senses? And reason? And as what did he bring you in? Wasn't it as a mortal? As one who would live on earth with a little bit of flesh, and watch his governance, and join him in his procession and his festival for a little while?

4.1.105 Won't you, then, for as long as it's been granted you, watch the procession and the festival, and then, when he leads you out, go, with a bow of reverence and thanks for all you've heard and seen?

4.1.106 "No; I wanted to go on celebrating." Yes, and the initiates want to go on being initiated, and perhaps the crowds at Olympia want to see more athletes. But the festival has an end. Leave; depart as someone grateful, someone with self-respect; make room for others. Others too must be born, just as you were born, and once born they must have space and houses and the necessities of life. If the first don't step aside, what's left? Why are you insatiable? Why are you never satisfied? Why are you crowding the world?

4.1.107 —Yes, but I want my little children with me, and my wife. —Are they yours? Don't they belong to the one who gave them? To the one who made you too? Then won't you give up what isn't yours? Won't you yield to your better?

4.1.108 —Why, then, did he bring me in on these terms? —And if they don't suit you, leave; he has no need of a spectator who complains. He needs people who'll celebrate with him, dance

with him, so that they applaud instead, praise it as divine, and sing hymns to the festival.

4.1.109 The shirkers and cowards he won't be sorry to see left out of the festival. For even when they were there, they didn't spend their time as people at a feast, or fill their proper place; they were in pain, blaming their guardian spirit, their fortune, their companions—insensible both of what they'd been given and of their own powers, which they had received for facing adversity: greatness of soul, nobility, courage, and that very freedom we're now looking for.

4.1.110 —What have I received these things for, then? —To use them. —For how long? —For as long as the lender wants. —What if they're necessary to me? —Don't get attached to them, and they won't be. Don't tell yourself they're necessary, and they aren't.

4.1.111 This is the exercise you should have been practicing from morning to evening. Start with the smallest and most fragile things, a pot, a cup; then move on in the same way to a tunic, a little dog, a little horse, a bit of land; from there to yourself, your body, the parts of your body, your children, your wife, your brothers.

4.1.112 Look all around and throw them away from you. Purify your judgments, in case something that isn't yours has got attached to you, or grown into you, or will hurt you when it's torn away.

4.1.113 And say, as you train every day, as you do there, not that you're doing philosophy (grant that it's a pretentious word), but that you're going through the rite of emancipation. For this is freedom in truth.

4.1.114 This is the freedom Diogenes received from Antisthenes, and afterward he said he could no longer be enslaved by anyone.

4.1.115 That's why—look how he behaved when he was captured, how he treated the pirates! Did he call any of them master? And I don't mean the word: it's not the sound I'm afraid of, but the emotion the sound comes out of.

4.1.116 Look how he rebukes them for feeding their captives badly! Look how he was sold! Did he look for a master? No—for a slave. And once he was sold, look how he behaved toward his owner! He immediately started discussing with him that he shouldn't dress like that, or have his hair cut like that, and about his sons, how they ought to live.

4.1.117 And what's surprising in that? If he'd bought a gymnastics trainer, would he have treated him as his servant or as his master in matters of wrestling? Likewise if he'd bought a doctor, or an architect. And so in every field, the expert must necessarily be in charge of the non-expert.

4.1.118 Whoever, then, has acquired the knowledge of how to live, in general, what else can he be but the master? For who is master on a ship? —The helmsman. —Why? Because whoever disobeys him pays the penalty.

4.1.119 —But my master can flog me. —Without paying a penalty? —That's what I used to think too. —But because he can't do it without paying a penalty, he isn't permitted to; and no one does wrong without paying a penalty.

4.1.120 —And what penalty, in your view, does the man who chains up his own slave pay? —The chaining itself. You'll admit that too, if you want to hold on to the truth that a human being is not a wild beast but a tame animal.

4.1.121 For when does a vine fare badly? When it acts contrary to its own nature. When does a rooster?

4.1.122 The same. So a human being too. What, then, is his nature? To bite and kick and throw people in prison and cut off heads? No: to do good, to cooperate, to wish others well. So he fares badly, whether you like it or not, when he acts unkindly.

4.1.123 So Socrates didn't fare badly? —No, his judges and accusers did. —Nor Helvidius at Rome? —No, but the man who killed him did. —What do you mean?

4.1.124 —Just as you don't say that the rooster that won but was cut to pieces has fared badly, but the one that was beaten without a scratch; nor do you call a dog happy that neither

chases nor exerts itself, but when you see it sweating, in pain, bursting from the run.

4.1.125 What paradox are we uttering, if we say that for each thing what is contrary to its nature is bad? Is that a paradox? Don't you say it yourself about everything else? Why, then, do you take a different line about human beings alone?

4.1.126 But when we say that human nature is gentle, affectionate, and trustworthy, isn't that a paradox? —Not that either.

4.1.127 —How, then, is a person not harmed when he's flogged, or chained, or beheaded? Isn't it rather like this: if he suffers nobly, he goes away having gained and profited besides, while the one who is harmed is the one who suffers the most pitiful and shameful fate, who becomes a wolf instead of a human being, or a viper, or a wasp?

4.1.128 Come, then, let's go over what we've agreed. The unhindered person is free, the one who has things ready to hand as he wishes. But anyone who can be hindered, or compelled, or impeded, or thrown into something against his will, is a slave.

4.1.129 And who is unhindered? The one who aims at nothing that isn't his own. And what isn't his own? What isn't up to us to have or not to have, or to have of a certain kind or in a certain condition.

4.1.130 So the body isn't your own, its parts aren't your own, your property isn't your own. If, then, you get attached to any of these as your own, you'll pay the penalty that someone deserves who aims at what isn't his own.

4.1.131 This road leads to freedom, this alone is release from slavery, [alone]: being able at last to say with your whole soul, "Lead me, Zeus, and you too, Destiny, / wherever you have assigned me."

4.1.132 But what do you say, philosopher? The tyrant summons you to say something that's beneath you. Do you say it or not? Tell me. —Let me think about it. —Now you'll think about it? When you were in school, what did you think about? Didn't you practice what things are good, what bad, and what neither? —I thought about it. —And what conclusions did you people reach?

4.1.133 —That just and fine things are good, and unjust and shameful things bad. —Life isn't a good, is it? —No. —Dying isn't bad, is it? —No. —Or prison? —No. —And ignoble, untrustworthy speech, betrayal of a friend, flattery of a tyrant—how did those seem to you?

4.1.134 —Bad. —Well then? You aren't thinking it over; you've already thought it over and decided. For what sort of question is this: "whether it's my duty, when I can secure the greatest goods for myself, not to secure the greatest evils for myself"? A fine question, and a necessary one, calling for a great deal of deliberation! Why are you making fun of us, man?

4.1.135 No such question ever arises. If you really believed that shameful things were bad and everything else neither, you'd never have come to this hesitation, not even close; you'd have been able to decide on the spot, with your mind, as you do with your sight.

4.1.136 For when do you stop to consider whether black things are white, or heavy things light? Don't you just go along with what plainly appears? So how can you say you're now considering whether things that are neither good nor bad are more to be avoided than bad things?

4.1.137 But you don't hold these judgments. To you, these things seem not neither but the greatest evils, and those others not evils but nothing to do with us.

4.1.138 For that's how you've trained yourself from the start: "Where am I? In school. And who's listening to me? I'm talking among philosophers. But I've left school: away with all that stuff for bookworms and fools!" That's how a friend is convicted on a philosopher's testimony, that's how a philosopher becomes a hanger-on at other men's tables,

4.1.139 that's how he hires himself out for money, that's how a man in the Senate doesn't say what he thinks. Inside him his judgment is shouting,

4.1.140 not some cold, wretched little opinion hanging by a hair from random arguments, but a strong, effective judgment, initiated by training in action.

4.1.141 Watch yourself, how you take news—I don't say news that your child has died; how could you manage that?—but that your oil has been spilled, your wine drunk up,

4.1.142 so that someone might stand over you as you get worked up and say just this: "Philosopher, you talk differently in school. Why are you deceiving us? Why, when you're a worm, do you say you're a human being?"

4.1.143 I'd like to stand over one of them while he's having sex, to see how he strains and what sounds he makes, whether he remembers his own name, or the discourses he hears or gives or reads.

4.1.144 And what does this have to do with freedom? —Nothing else has to do with it but this, whether you rich people like it or not.

4.1.145 —And what's your evidence for this? —What else but you yourselves, who have that great lord of yours and live by his every nod and gesture, who faint away if he so much as looks at one of you with a scowl, who pay court to old women and old men, and say, "I can't do this; I'm not allowed"?[6]

4.1.146 Why aren't you allowed? Weren't you arguing with me just now, claiming you were free? "But Aprulla has stopped me." Then tell the truth, slave; don't run away from your masters, or disown them, or dare to go through the rite of emancipation when you have so many proofs of your slavery.

4.1.147 And yet someone who is compelled by love to do something against his own judgment, who sees what is better but lacks the strength to follow it, one might think all the more deserving of forgiveness, since he's in the grip of something violent and, in a way, divine.

4.1.148 But who could put up with you, in love with old women and old men, wiping their noses and washing them, bribing them with presents, and at the same time nursing them like a slave when they're sick and praying for them to die, and quizzing the doctors whether they're mortally ill yet? Or again, when

6 Courting rich, childless old people in hopes of an inheritance was a notorious Roman pursuit.

for the sake of these great and august offices and honors you kiss the hands of other people's slaves—so that you're the slave of people who aren't even free?

4.1.149 And then you go strutting around in front of me as praetor, as consul. Don't I know how you became praetor, where you got your consulship, who gave it to you?

4.1.150 For my part, I wouldn't even want to live, if I had to live by Felicio's favor, putting up with his haughtiness and his slavish insolence. For I know what a slave is like who is fortunate, as people think, and puffed up with conceit.[7]

4.1.151 "Are you free yourself, then?" he says. —I want to be, by the gods, and I pray to be, but I can't yet look my masters in the face. I still value my poor body; I set great store by keeping it whole, though I don't even have it whole.

## DIOGENES AND SOCRATES

*Diogenes and Socrates show freedom in practice, even in the face of death.*

4.1.152 But I can show you a free man, so that you won't have to look for an example any more. Diogenes was free. How so? Not because he was born of free parents (he wasn't), but because he himself was free, because he had thrown away every handle of slavery, and there was no way for anyone to get near him, nothing to grab him by to enslave him.

4.1.153 Everything he had came away easily; everything was only loosely attached. If you took hold of his property, he'd have let it go to you rather than follow you for its sake; if of his leg, his leg; if of his whole poor body, his whole poor body; and the same with his family, friends, country. He knew where he had them from, and from whom, and on what terms he had received them.

4.1.154 His true ancestors, the gods, and his real country he would never have abandoned, nor would he have let anyone else

7 Felicio was evidently a slave who rose to influence at court, possibly one once owned by Epaphroditus, Epictetus' own former master.

outdo him in obeying and submitting to them, nor would anyone else have died more readily for his country.

4.1.155 For he never sought to seem to be doing something for the sake of the universe; he remembered that everything that happens comes from there, and is done for the sake of that country, and is enjoined on us by the one who governs it.

4.1.156 So look at what he himself says and writes: "That's why," he says, "you're allowed, Diogenes, to talk as you like both with the king of the Persians and with Archidamus, king of the Spartans."

4.1.157 Was it because he was born of free parents? Were all the Athenians, and all the Spartans and Corinthians, unable to talk with those kings as they liked because they were born of slaves—was that why they were afraid of them and paid court to them?

4.1.158 Why, then, he asks, am I allowed? "Because I don't consider my poor body my own, because I need nothing, because the law is everything to me and nothing else is." These were the things that allowed him to be free.

4.1.159 And so that you won't think I'm showing you the example of a man without ties, who had neither wife nor children nor country nor friends nor relatives to bend him and pull him this way and that, take Socrates, and look at a man who had a wife and children—but as not his own—and a country, as far as he ought and in the way he ought, and friends and relatives, all of which he subordinated to the law and to obedience to it.

4.1.160 That's why, when he had to serve in the army, he was the first to go, and there he faced danger without sparing himself at all; and when he was sent by the tyrants to fetch Leon, he didn't even deliberate, because he considered it shameful, though he knew he would have to die if it came to that.[8]

4.1.161 And what difference did it make to him? He wanted to preserve something else: not his bit of flesh, but the trustworthy, self-respecting man he was.

4.1.162 These things can't be tampered with or made to submit. Then, when he had to defend his life in court, does he behave

like a man with children, or with a wife? No, like a man alone. And when he had to drink the poison, how does he behave?

4.1.163 He could have been saved, and when Crito told him, "Escape, for your children's sake," what does he say? Did he consider it a stroke of luck? How could he? He looks to what is fitting, and the rest he doesn't even look at or take into account. For he didn't want, he says, to save his poor body, but that which is increased and preserved by justice, and diminished and destroyed by injustice.

4.1.164 And Socrates isn't saved by shameful means—the man who refused to put the question to the vote when the Athenians demanded it, who looked down on the tyrants, who held such discussions about excellence and being a fine and good man;[9]

4.1.165 this man can't be saved by shameful means. He is saved by dying, not by running away. And a good actor, too, is saved by stopping when he should, rather than by acting on past the right moment.

4.1.166 What, then, will become of his children? "If I were going away to Thessaly, you'd take care of them; and when I've gone abroad to Hades, will there be no one to take care of them?" See how he gives death a pet name, and makes fun of it.

4.1.167 But if it had been you and me, we'd have immediately philosophized our way to "Those who do wrong should be paid back in kind," and added, "If I'm saved I'll be of use to many people, but if I die, to no one"; and if we'd had to crawl out through a hole, we'd have got out.

4.1.168 And how would we have been of use to anyone? Where would those people still have been? Or if we were useful while alive, wouldn't we have been much more useful to people by dying when we should and as we should?

8 In 404 BC the Thirty Tyrants ordered Socrates and four others to arrest Leon of Salamis for execution; Socrates simply went home.

9 In 406 BC, as presiding officer of the Assembly, Socrates refused to put to the vote an illegal motion to try the generals of Arginusae together.

4.1.169 And now that Socrates is dead, the memory of what he did and said while he was still alive is no less useful to people, or even more so.

4.1.170 Practice these things, these judgments, these arguments; keep your eyes on these examples, if you want to be free, if you desire it as the thing deserves.

4.1.171 And is it any wonder if you buy so great a thing at the price of so many and such great things? For the sake of what people call freedom, some hang themselves, others throw themselves off cliffs, and sometimes whole cities have been destroyed;

4.1.172 for the sake of true freedom, which is secure and beyond the reach of any plot, won't you give way when God asks for what he has given you? Won't you practice, as Plato says, not only dying but also being tortured, being exiled, being flogged, and in short giving back everything that belongs to others?

4.1.173 Otherwise you'll be a slave among slaves, even if you're consul ten thousand times, even if you go up to the Palace, none the less. And you'll realize that what philosophers say may go against common opinion, as Cleanthes used to say, but not against reason.

4.1.174 For you'll learn by experience that it's true, and that these things people admire and strive for are no use to those who get them. Those who haven't got them yet have the impression that once these things arrive, every good thing will arrive with them. Then, when they do arrive, the fever is just as high, the tossing the same, the nausea, the craving for what isn't there.

4.1.175 For freedom is not won by satisfying what you desire, but by removing desire.

4.1.176 And so that you know this is true: just as you've toiled for those things, shift your toil over to these. Stay up at night to acquire a judgment that makes you free;

4.1.177 pay court to a philosopher instead of a rich old man; be seen hanging around his doors. You won't disgrace yourself by being seen there, and you won't go away empty-handed or

without profit, if you approach him as you should. If you don't believe it, at least try it: there's no disgrace in trying.

## CHAPTER 2: ON SOCIAL DEALINGS

*You cannot keep your old friends' good opinion and also improve; you must choose.*

4.2.1 This is the point you must attend to above all: never become so intimate with any of your former acquaintances or friends that you sink to the same level as him. Otherwise you'll ruin yourself.

4.2.2 And if the thought creeps in, "He'll think I'm awkward, and he won't feel the same toward me as before," remember that nothing comes free, and it isn't possible to stop doing the same things and [not] still be the same person you once were.

4.2.3 So choose which you want: to be loved as much as before by the people who loved you, by staying like your former self; or to be better and not get the same treatment.

4.2.4 For if the second is better, turn to it straight away, and don't let other calculations pull you off course. No one who plays both sides can make progress. If you've preferred this to everything, if you want to devote yourself to this alone, to work hard at this, let everything else go.

4.2.5 Otherwise this double game will cost you both ways: you won't make the progress you should, and you won't get what you used to get before.

4.2.6 For before, when you went after worthless things wholeheartedly, you were pleasant company.

4.2.7 You can't excel in both kinds of thing. Necessarily, to the extent that you take part in the one, you'll fall short in the other. You can't stop drinking with the people you used to drink with and still seem as pleasant to them. So choose whether you want to be a drunkard and pleasant to them, or sober and unpleasant. You can't stop singing with the people you used to sing with and still be loved by them as much. So here too, choose which you want.

4.2.8 For if it's better to have self-respect and decency than to have someone say, "What a pleasant fellow!", let the rest go, give up on it, turn away from it, have nothing to do with those people.

4.2.9 But if that doesn't suit you, turn wholeheartedly to the opposite: become one of the debauchees, one of the adulterers, do everything that goes with it, and you'll get what you want. Jump up and cheer the dancer too.

4.2.10 Roles as different as that don't mix. You can't play both Thersites and Agamemnon. If you want to be Thersites, you have to be hunchbacked and bald; if Agamemnon, tall and handsome, and loving those under your command.

### CHAPTER 3: WHAT TO EXCHANGE FOR WHAT

*Whatever external thing you lose, consider the self-respect and freedom you gain in exchange.*

4.3.1 Keep this ready at hand: whenever you lose something external, ask what you're getting in its place. And if that's worth more, never say, "I've suffered a loss"—

4.3.2 not if you get a horse for a donkey, an ox for a sheep, a fine action for some small change, the right kind of quiet for empty chatter, self-respect for foul talk.

4.3.3 Remember this, and you'll keep your role everywhere as it ought to be. Otherwise, consider that your time is being wasted for nothing, and all the attention you're now paying to yourself, you're about to spill and overturn completely.

4.3.4 And it takes very little to lose and overturn everything: a slight turning away from reason.

4.3.5 For a helmsman to capsize his ship, he doesn't need the same preparation as to save it. If he turns it a little into the wind, it's lost; and even if he doesn't do it deliberately but just lets his attention wander a little, it's lost.

4.3.6 It's much the same here too: doze off for a moment, and everything you've gathered up to now is gone. So pay attention to your impressions; stay awake.

4.3.7 What you're guarding is no small thing: it's self-respect, trustworthiness, steadiness, freedom from passion, from distress, from fear, tranquility—in a word, freedom.

4.3.8 What are you going to sell these for? Look at what they're worth. —But I won't get anything like that in exchange for it. — Then when you do get that other thing, look again at what you're getting in exchange.

4.3.9 "I have decency, he has a tribuneship; he has a generalship, I have self-respect. But I don't shout where it's unseemly; I won't stand up where I shouldn't. For I'm free and a friend of God, so as to obey him willingly."

4.3.10 "Nothing else should I lay claim to: not body, not property, not office, not reputation, nothing at all. For he doesn't want me to lay claim to them either. If he had wanted that, he would have made them good for me. As it is, he hasn't; and that's why I can't disobey any of his commands."

4.3.11 Guard your own good in everything; and as for the rest, take what's given, so far as you can use it reasonably, and be content with that alone. Otherwise you'll be unhappy, you'll fail, you'll be hindered, you'll be blocked.

4.3.12 These are the laws sent from up there, these are the edicts. It's these you must become an interpreter of, these you must be subject to, not those of Masurius and Cassius.[10]

## CHAPTER 4: TO THOSE SET ON LIVING IN QUIET

*Craving leisure and books enslaves us as much as craving office; use whatever circumstances come.*

4.4.1 Remember that it isn't only desire for office and wealth that makes people abject and subservient to others, but also desire for quiet, and leisure, and travel, and learning. For, in short, whatever the external thing may be, the value you set on it makes you subservient to someone else.

4.4.2 So what difference does it make whether you long for a seat in the Senate or long not to be a senator? Whether you long

for office or for freedom from office? Whether you say, "I'm miserable, I have nothing to do, I'm tied to my books like a corpse," or "I'm miserable, I have no time to read"?

4.4.3 For just as morning calls and office belong to things external and outside our choice, so does a book.

4.4.4 Or else tell me: why do you want to read? If you make it end in just this [just this], being entertained or learning something, you're a frigid, wretched creature. But if you refer it to what you should, what is that but the smooth flow of life? And if reading doesn't get you the smooth flow of life, what use is it?

4.4.5 —But it does get it for me, he says, and that's why I'm annoyed at being deprived of it. —And what sort of smooth flow is it that anyone at all can obstruct—I don't mean Caesar or a friend of Caesar, but a crow, a flute-player, a fever, thirty thousand other things? Nothing is so characteristic of the smooth flow of life as being continuous and unobstructed.

4.4.6 Now I'm called to do something; now I'll go and attend to the standards I have to keep: to act with self-respect, with security, without desire or aversion toward externals;

4.4.7 and then I pay attention to people, what they say, how they behave—and not out of malice, or so as to have something to criticize or laugh at, but I turn back to myself, to see whether I make the same mistakes too. "How, then, am I to stop? Once I made that mistake too; but not any more, thank God."

4.4.8 Come now: when you've done this and been occupied with it, have you done a worse job than if you'd read a thousand lines or written as many? When you eat, are you upset that you're not reading? Aren't you content to eat in accordance with what you've read?

4.4.9 When you bathe? When you exercise? Then why don't you keep an even keel in everything, both when you go to see Caesar and when you go to see so-and-so? If you keep yourself free from passion, unshaken,

4.4.10 composed; if you observe what happens rather than being observed; if you don't envy those preferred over you; if

material things don't dazzle you—what are you missing? Books? How, or for what?

4.4.11 Isn't this a kind of preparation for living? But living is made up of other things than these. It's as if an athlete, on entering the stadium, were to burst into tears because he isn't training outside.

4.4.12 This is what you trained for; this is what the jumping weights were for, the sand, the young sparring partners. And now you're looking for those, when it's time for action?

4.4.13 It's as if, in the area of assent, when impressions present themselves, some cognitive and some not, we didn't want to tell them apart but to read the books *On Cognition*.

4.4.14 What's the reason, then? That we've never read for this purpose, never written for this purpose: to deal with the impressions that strike us in our actions in accordance with nature. We stop short at learning what is said and being able to explain it to someone else, at analyzing a syllogism and working through a hypothetical argument.

4.4.15 That's why where your eagerness lies, there your obstruction lies too. Do you want what is not up to you, at all costs? Then be prevented, be obstructed, fail.

4.4.16 But if we read *On Impulse* not to see what is said about impulse, but so as to put impulse into practice; and *On Desire and Aversion* so that we never fail to get what we desire nor fall into what we avoid; and *On Duty* so that, remembering our relationships, we do nothing irrationally or against them—

4.4.17 then we wouldn't be annoyed at being hindered in our reading, but would be content with performing the corresponding actions, and we wouldn't count up what we've been used to counting till now: "Today I read so many lines, I wrote so many,"

4.4.18 but "Today I used impulse as the philosophers teach, I didn't use desire, I used aversion only toward things within the scope of choice, I wasn't overawed by so-and-so, I wasn't put out of countenance by so-and-so, I trained my endurance, my self-

**10** Masurius Sabinus and Cassius Longinus were celebrated Roman jurists of the first century AD.

restraint, my cooperation"; and in this way we'd thank God for the things we ought to thank him for.

4.4.19 As it is, we don't realize that we ourselves, in a different way, become just like the many. One man is afraid he won't hold office; you, that you will.

4.4.20 Don't be, man! Just as you laugh at the man who's afraid of not holding office, laugh at yourself too. It makes no difference whether you're thirsty with fever or afraid of water like someone with rabies.

4.4.21 Or how will you still be able to say Socrates' words, "If this is what pleases God, so be it"? Do you think that if Socrates had longed to spend his leisure in the Lyceum or the Academy, talking every day with the young men, he would have gone on campaign as readily as he did, every time he did? Wouldn't he have wailed and groaned, "Poor me, here I am, miserable and wretched, when I could be sunning myself in the Lyceum"?

4.4.22 Was that your task, then—sunning yourself? Wasn't it rather to have a smooth flow of life, to be unhindered, unobstructed? And how would he still have been Socrates if he'd wailed like that? How would he still have written hymns in prison?

4.4.23 In short, then, remember this: if you value anything outside your own choice, you've destroyed your choice. And outside it lies not only office but also freedom from office, not only being busy but also leisure.

4.4.24 "So now I have to spend my life in this uproar." What do you mean, uproar? Among lots of people? What's hard about that? Imagine you're at Olympia; think of it as a festival. There too one person shouts one thing, another does something else, another jostles someone else. In the baths there's a crowd; and which of us doesn't enjoy that festival, and leave it sorry to go?

4.4.25 Don't be hard to please, or squeamish about what happens. "The vinegar's off: it's sour." "The honey's off: it upsets my constitution." "I don't want vegetables." In the same way: "I don't want leisure: it's a wilderness." "I don't want a crowd: it's an uproar."

4.4.26 But if things turn out so that you spend your life alone or with a few people, call it quiet and use the situation for what you should: talk to yourself, train your impressions, work out your preconceptions. And if you fall in with a crowd, call it games, a festival, a holiday, and try to celebrate along with everyone.

4.4.27 For what sight is more pleasant to someone who loves people than lots of people? We enjoy seeing herds of horses or cattle; when we see many ships, we're delighted. Is anyone upset at seeing lots of people?

4.4.28 "But they're shouting me down." Then it's your hearing that's obstructed. What's that to you? Surely not the faculty that uses impressions as well? And who prevents you from using desire and aversion in accordance with nature, impulse and repulsion? What uproar is equal to that?

4.4.29 Just remember your general principles: "What's mine, what isn't mine? What's been given to me? What does God want me to do now, and what doesn't he want?"

4.4.30 A little while ago he wanted you to have leisure, to talk to yourself, to write about these things, to read, to listen, to prepare; you had enough time for that. Now he says to you, "Come to the contest now, show us what you've learned, how you've trained. How long will you go on exercising by yourself? Now it's time for you to find out whether you're one of the athletes worthy of victory, or one of those who go around the world losing."

4.4.31 So why are you annoyed? No contest happens without uproar. There have to be lots of trainers, lots of people cheering, lots of officials, lots of spectators.

4.4.32 —But I wanted to live in quiet. —Then groan and wail, as you deserve. For what greater penalty is there for someone uneducated who disobeys the divine edicts than to grieve, to mourn, to envy—in short, to be unfortunate and miserable? Don't you want to free yourself from these things?

And how am I to free myself?

4.4.33 —Haven't you often heard that you must eliminate desire entirely, turn your aversion only toward things within the scope

of choice, and that you must let everything go—body, property, reputation, books, uproar, offices, freedom from office? For wherever you lean, you're a slave, you're subjected, you become open to hindrance and compulsion, wholly in the power of others.

4.4.34 Instead, keep Cleanthes' line ready: "Lead me, Zeus, and you too, Destiny." Do you want me to go to Rome? To Rome. To Gyara? To Gyara. To Athens? To Athens. To prison? To prison.

4.4.35 If you once say, "When can I get away to Athens?", you're lost. This desire, if it's unfulfilled, is bound to make you unfortunate; if it's fulfilled, vain, puffed up about things you shouldn't be; and again, if you're obstructed, miserable, falling into what you don't want.

4.4.36 So let all these things go. "Athens is beautiful." But happiness is far more beautiful: being free from passion, undisturbed, with your affairs dependent on no one.

4.4.37 "There's uproar in Rome, and morning calls." But the smooth flow of life makes up for all the annoyances. So if this is the time for them, why don't you get rid of your aversion to them? What need is there to carry loads like a donkey being beaten with a stick?

4.4.38 Otherwise, you'll see that you must always be a slave to whoever can arrange your release, to whoever can obstruct everything, and pay court to him as to an Evil Spirit.[11]

4.4.39 There is one road to the smooth flow of life (keep this ready at dawn, by day and at night): to stand aside from what is outside our choice, to regard nothing as your own, to hand everything over to the divine, to fortune, to make them the stewards of these things,

4.4.40 as Zeus too has made them, and to devote yourself to one thing alone, what is your own, what is unhindered; and to read referring your reading to this, and to write and listen in the same way.

4.4.41 That's why I can't call someone hardworking if all I hear is that he reads or writes; and even if someone adds that he does it

all night long, I still won't say it until I know what he's doing it for. For you don't call a man hardworking who stays up for the sake of a girl; nor, then, do I.

4.4.42 But if he does it for reputation, I call him reputation-hungry; if for money, money-hungry, not hardworking.

4.4.43 But if he refers his labor to his own ruling center, so that it may be and remain in accordance with nature, then and only then do I call him hardworking.

4.4.44 Never praise or blame people on the basis of things anyone can do, but on the basis of their judgments. For these are what belong to each person, and what make actions shameful or fine.

4.4.45 Remember this, and rejoice in what you have, and love the things the moment calls for.

4.4.46 If you see any of what you've learned and examined coming to meet you in your actions, be glad of it. If you've put away or reduced malice and abusiveness, if rashness, foul language, carelessness, sloppiness; if you're not moved by what used to move you, or at least not as much as before—then you can hold a festival every day: today because you behaved well in this action, tomorrow because you did in another.

4.4.47 How much better a reason for sacrifice than a consulship or a governorship! These things come to you from yourself and from the gods. Remember this: who the giver is, and to whom he gives, and for whose sake.

4.4.48 Nourished on these reflections, does it still matter to you where you'll be happy, where you'll please God? Aren't the gods equally far from every place? Don't they see what happens equally well from everywhere?

**11** People made offerings to evil spirits to avert harm, as a counterpart to the worship of the "Good Spirit."

## CHAPTER 5: AGAINST THE QUARRELSOME AND BRUTAL

*The good man, like Socrates, avoids fighting, since no one can harm what is his own.*

4.5.1 The fine and good man neither fights with anyone himself nor, as far as he can, lets anyone else fight.

4.5.2 And for this, as for everything else, we have an example set before us in the life of Socrates, who not only avoided fighting everywhere himself, but wouldn't let others fight either.

4.5.3 Look in Xenophon's *Symposium* at how many fights he broke up; and again, how he put up with Thrasymachus, with Polus, with Callicles; how he put up with his wife, and with his son when the boy tried to refute him with sophistries.[12]

4.5.4 For he remembered very firmly that no one has power over another's ruling center. So he wanted nothing but what was his own.

4.5.5 And what is that? Not *this man* in accordance with nature—for that belongs to someone else—but that while they do their own part as they see fit, he himself will nonetheless be and remain in accordance with nature, doing only his own part so that they too may be in accordance with nature.

4.5.6 For this is what the fine and good man always has before him. To be a general? No; but, if it's given him, to preserve his own ruling center in dealing with that material. To marry? No; but, if marriage is given him, to keep himself in accordance with nature in dealing with that material.

4.5.7 But if he wants his son or his wife not to go wrong, he wants what isn't his own not to be not his own. And being educated is exactly this: learning what is your own and what belongs to others.

4.5.8 So where is there room for fighting any more, for someone in that state? Is he surprised at anything that happens? Does anything seem new to him? Doesn't he expect worse and harsher

12 Thrasymachus, Polus and Callicles are Socrates' combative opponents in Plato's *Republic* and *Gorgias*.

things from bad people than actually befall him? Doesn't he count as a gain whatever they fall short of the worst?

4.5.9 "So-and-so insulted you." Many thanks to him for not hitting me. "But he hit you too." Many thanks for not wounding me. "But he wounded you too." Many thanks for not killing me.

4.5.10 For when did he learn, or from whom, that man is a gentle animal, that we love one another, that wrongdoing itself is a great harm to the one who does wrong? Since he hasn't learned these things or been convinced of them, why shouldn't he follow what appears to be to his advantage?

4.5.11 "Your neighbor threw stones." Well, did you do anything wrong? "But the things in the house got broken." Are you a bit of crockery, then?

4.5.12 No—you're choice. So what's been given you for dealing with this? If you're asking as a wolf: to bite back and throw more stones in return. But if you're asking as a human being, look into your storeroom, see what faculties you came into the world with. The faculty of a wild beast? The faculty of bearing grudges?

4.5.13 When, then, is a horse wretched? When it's deprived of its natural faculties—not when it can't crow, but when it can't run. And a dog? When it can't fly?

4.5.14 No, when it can't follow a scent. Isn't it the same, then, with a human being? The unfortunate one isn't the one who can't strangle lions or throw his arms around statues (he didn't come into the world with any faculties from nature for that), but the one who has lost his fair-mindedness, his trustworthiness.

4.5.15 That's the man people should gather to mourn, for all the evils he's fallen into—not, by Zeus, the one who's been born or the one who's died, but the one who, while still alive, has happened to lose what's his own. Not his inheritance, his little field and little house and his inn and his few slaves (for none of these is a human being's own; they all belong to others, they're slaves, subject to account, handed now to one person, now to another, by their masters),

4.5.16 but his human qualities, the stamps he came into the world with in his mind—the kind we look for on coins too: if we find them, we accept the coin; if we don't, we throw it away.

4.5.17 "Whose stamp is on this sestertius?" "Trajan's?" "Hand it over." "Nero's?" "Throw it out, it's no good, it's rotten." So too here. What stamp do his judgments bear? "Gentle, sociable, tolerant, affectionate." Hand him over, I accept him, I make this man a citizen, I accept him as a neighbor, a fellow passenger.

4.5.18 Only make sure he doesn't have a Neronian stamp. Is he irascible, vindictive, forever complaining about his lot? "If he feels like it, he smashes the heads of the people he meets."

4.5.19 Then why did you say he's a human being? Is each thing judged by its bare shape? In that case, call the wax apple an apple too.

4.5.20 It has to have the smell and the taste as well; the outward outline isn't enough. So neither are the nose and the eyes enough to make a human being; he has to have human judgments.

4.5.21 This one doesn't listen to reason, doesn't follow when he's refuted: he's a donkey. This one's self-respect has died: he's useless, anything but a human being. This one looks for someone to meet and kick or bite: so he isn't even a sheep or a donkey, but some kind of wild beast.

4.5.22 What then? Do you want me to be despised? —By whom? By people who know? And how will people who know despise someone gentle and self-respecting? By people who don't know, then? What do you care? No other craftsman cares about those who lack his craft. —But they'll go for me all the more.

4.5.23 —What do you mean, "me"? Can anyone harm your choice, or prevent you from using the impressions that come to you as nature intended? —

4.5.24 No. —Then why are you still upset, and why do you want to make yourself look fearsome? Why don't you step forward in public and proclaim that you're at peace with all people, whatever they do, and that you laugh most of all at those who think they're harming you? "These slaves don't know who I am,

or where my good and bad lie; they have no access to what's mine."

4.5.25 In the same way the people living in a strong city laugh at the besiegers: "Now what are these people going to all this trouble for, for nothing? Our wall is secure, we have food for a very long time, and every other supply."

4.5.26 These are what make a city strong and impregnable; but for a human soul, nothing does except judgments. For what wall is so strong, what body so unbreakable, what possession so secure from being taken away, what rank so safe from plots?

4.5.27 Everything everywhere is mortal, easily captured; and whoever pays any attention at all to such things is bound to be upset, to expect the worst, to fear, to mourn, to have his desires unfulfilled and his aversions falling into what they avoid.

4.5.28 Then won't we make strong the only security we've been given? Won't we withdraw from what is mortal and slavish and work at what is immortal and free by nature? Don't we remember that no one harms or benefits anyone else, but that it's the judgment about each of these things that harms, that overturns —that this is fighting, this is civil strife, this is war?

4.5.29 What made Eteocles and Polynices what they were was nothing but this: the judgment about sole rule, the judgment about exile—that the one is the worst of evils, the other the greatest of goods.

4.5.30 This is the nature of every creature: to pursue the good and flee the bad, and to regard whoever deprives it of the one and involves it in the other as an enemy and a plotter, even if he's a brother, or a son, or a father.

4.5.31 For nothing is closer kin to us than the good. So if these things are good and bad, then neither is a father a friend to his sons, nor a brother to his brother, but everything everywhere is full of enemies, plotters, informers.

4.5.32 But if choice as it should be is the only good, and choice as it shouldn't be the only bad, where is there room any more for fighting, for abuse? About what? About things that are nothing

to us? Against whom? Against the ignorant, the unfortunate, those who are deceived about the most important things?

4.5.33 Remembering this, Socrates ran his own household, putting up with a very harsh wife and a thankless son. For how far did her harshness go? To pouring as much water over his head as she liked, to trampling on his cake. And what's that to me, if I take the view that these things are nothing to me?

4.5.34 But this is my task, and no tyrant will prevent me if I'm willing, nor any master, nor the many the one, nor the stronger the weaker; for this has been given by God to each person free from hindrance.

4.5.35 These judgments create friendship in a household, concord in a city, peace among nations; they make a person grateful to God, confident everywhere, since what he's dealing with belongs to others and is worth nothing.

4.5.36 But we—we're good at writing these things and reading them, and at praising them when they're read out; but as for being convinced by them, we're nowhere near.

4.5.37 So the saying about the Spartans, "Lions at home, but foxes at Ephesus," will fit us too: lions in the lecture room, foxes outside.

## CHAPTER 6: TO THOSE UPSET AT BEING PITIED

*If you mind being pitied, you have not yet convinced yourself about good and bad.*

4.6.1 It upsets me, he says, to be pitied. —Is it your business, then, that you're pitied, or the business of those who pity you? Well? Is it up to you to stop it? —It is, if I show them that I don't deserve pity.

4.6.2 —And is this already true of you, not deserving pity, or not? —I think it is. But these people don't pity me for the things that would deserve it, if anything does, my mistakes; they pity me for poverty and lack of office and illnesses and deaths and other things like that.

4.6.3 —So are you ready to convince the many that none of these things is bad, and that it's possible to be happy even when poor, or in office, or without honor? Or to show yourself to them as rich and in office?

4.6.4 The second of these is for a braggart, a frigid, worthless man. And look at what the pretense would take. You'll have to borrow some slaves and get hold of a few pieces of silver plate, and show them off in public, the same ones over and over if possible, and try to hide that they're the same; and shiny clothes and the rest of the display; and show yourself being honored by the prominent people, and try to dine with them, or at least seem to; and play some tricks with your body, to look handsomer and more well-bred than you are.

4.6.5 That's what you'll have to contrive if you want to take the second road so as not to be pitied. The first is endless and long: attempting the very thing Zeus couldn't do—convincing all human beings what things are good and bad.

4.6.6 Has that been given to you? Only this has been given to you: to convince yourself. And you haven't convinced yourself yet; and now, if you please, you're trying to convince others?

4.6.7 And who spends as much time with you as you do with yourself? Who is as persuasive to you as you are to yourself? Who is more kindly disposed and closer to you than you are to yourself?

4.6.8 How is it, then, that you haven't yet persuaded yourself to learn? Isn't everything upside down now? Is this what you've been working at? Not at learning how to be free from distress, undisturbed, unhumbled, and free?

4.6.9 Haven't you heard, then, that there's only one road leading there: letting go of what is outside our choice, standing aside from it, and admitting that it belongs to others?

4.6.10 So what kind of thing is someone else's opinion of you? —Something outside our choice. —So it's nothing to you? —Nothing. —Then when you're still stung and upset by it, do you think you're convinced about good and bad?

4.6.11 Won't you leave the others alone, then, and become your own pupil and your own teacher? "Others will see to whether it pays them to be and live contrary to nature; but no one is closer to me than I am."

4.6.12 "So what does it mean that I've heard the philosophers' arguments and I assent to them, and yet in practice I'm no lighter than before? Am I really so ungifted? And yet in other things, whatever I set my mind to, I didn't turn out too ungifted: I learned to read and write quickly, and to wrestle, and to do geometry, and to analyze syllogisms."

4.6.13 "Can it be that reason hasn't convinced me? And yet there's nothing else I approved of so much from the beginning, or chose; and now I read about these things, hear them, write them. So far we haven't found any argument stronger than this one."

4.6.14 "So what am I missing? Could it be that the opposite judgments haven't been rooted out? That my opinions themselves are untrained and not used to facing action, but have rusted like weapons put away in storage, and can't even be strapped onto me?"

4.6.15 "And yet in wrestling, or in writing or reading, I'm not content with having learned; I turn the problems put to me upside down and inside out, and weave new ones, and shifting arguments likewise."

4.6.16 "But the essential principles, starting from which one can become free from distress, free from fear and passion, unhindered, free—these I don't train in, nor do I practice them as they ought to be practiced."

4.6.17 "And then I care what others will say about me—whether I'll seem to them someone to reckon with, whether I'll seem happy?"

4.6.18 You poor wretch, won't you look at what you're saying about yourself? What do you seem to yourself? What are you like in forming opinions, in desire, in aversion, in impulse, in preparation, in purpose, and in the other human activities?

4.6.19 But you care whether others pity you? —Yes; but I'm pitied undeservedly. —So you're pained by that? And isn't someone who's pained pitiable? —Yes. —Then how are you still pitied undeservedly? By the very way you feel about pity, you make yourself deserve to be pitied.

4.6.20 What does Antisthenes say, then? Have you never heard? "It's a king's lot, Cyrus, to do good and be spoken ill of."

4.6.21 My head is fine, and everyone thinks I have a headache. What do I care? I have no fever, and they commiserate with me as if I had one: "Poor thing, you've had a fever for so long without a break." And I put on a gloomy face too and say, "Yes, truly, it's a long time now that I've been ill." "So what will happen?" Whatever God wants. And all the while I'm quietly laughing at the people who pity me.

4.6.22 What prevents the same thing here too, then? I'm poor, but I have the right judgment about poverty. So what do I care if they pity me for my poverty? I don't hold office, and others do. But I've formed the opinion I should about holding office and not holding it.

4.6.23 The people who pity me can see to that. I'm not hungry, not thirsty, not cold; but because they themselves are hungry or thirsty, they think I am too. So what am I to do for them? Go around proclaiming, "Don't be deceived, gentlemen, I'm fine; I pay no attention to poverty, or lack of office, or in short to anything but right judgments; these I have unhindered, and I don't care about anything else"?

4.6.24 And what nonsense is that? How do I still have right judgments if I'm not content to be who I am, but get all in a flutter about how I seem?

4.6.25 But others will get more and be preferred to me. —Well, what's more reasonable than that people who've worked hard at something should have more of the thing they've worked at? They've worked at offices, you at judgments; they at wealth, you at the use of impressions.

4.6.26 See whether they have more than you in the thing you've worked at and they neglect: whether they assent more in line

with natural standards, whether their desires fail less often than yours, whether their aversions fall less often into what they avoid, whether they aim better in intention, in purpose, in impulse, whether they keep to what's fitting as husbands, as sons, as parents, and so on through the other names of relationships.

4.6.27 But if they hold office, won't you tell yourself the truth: that you do nothing for the sake of it, while they do everything, and that it would be utterly unreasonable for the one who takes trouble over something to come off worse [not] than the one who neglects it?

4.6.28 No, but since I care about right judgments, it's more reasonable that I should hold office. —In what you care about, in judgments. But in what others have cared about more than you, give way to them. It's as if, because you had right judgments, you expected to hit the target better than the archers when you shot, or to do better at metalwork than the smiths.

4.6.29 So give up your concern for judgments and busy yourself with the things you want to acquire; and then weep if you don't succeed, since then you deserve to weep.

4.6.30 But as it is, you say you're devoted to other things, that you care about other things; and people are right when they say that one job has nothing in common with another.

4.6.31 One man gets up at dawn and looks for someone from the household to pay his respects to, someone to say something flattering to, someone to send a present to; how to please the dancer, how to curry favor with one person by slandering another.

4.6.32 When he prays, he prays about these things; when he sacrifices, he sacrifices for these things. Pythagoras' line, "Let not sleep come upon your tender eyes," he has transferred to this.[13]

4.6.33 "Where did I go wrong?" In matters of flattery. "What did I do?" Did I act like a free man, like a noble one? And if he finds anything like that, he rebukes and reproaches himself: "What did you have to say that for? Couldn't you have lied? Even the philosophers say nothing prevents you from telling a lie."

13 The line is from the Pythagorean *Golden Verses* quoted in 3.10.

4.6.34 But you, if you truly care about nothing but the right use of impressions, the moment you get up in the morning, reflect: "What do I still need for freedom from passion? What for tranquility? Who am I? A mere body? Property? Reputation? None of these. What, then? I am a rational animal."

4.6.35 What, then, are the demands on me? Go over what you've done. "Where did I go wrong in matters that bear on the smooth flow of life? What did I do that was unfriendly, unsociable, or inconsiderate? What that I should have done in these respects did I leave undone?"

4.6.36 With such a difference, then, in what you desire, in what you do, in what you pray for, do you still want an equal share with them in the things you haven't worked at and they have?

4.6.37 And then you're surprised if they pity you, and annoyed? But they aren't annoyed if you pity them. Why? Because they're convinced they're getting good things, and you aren't convinced.

4.6.38 That's why you aren't content with what's yours but reach for what's theirs, while they're content with their own and don't reach for yours. For if you were truly convinced that you're the one who's succeeding where good things are concerned, and they've gone astray, you wouldn't even give a thought to what they say about you.

## CHAPTER 7: ON FREEDOM FROM FEAR

*The tyrant's guards frighten only those who value the body and property he can take.*

4.7.1 What makes the tyrant fearsome? —His bodyguards, he says, and their swords, and the chamberlain, and the men who shut out those trying to get in.

4.7.2 —Then why is it that if you bring a child to him when he's with his bodyguards, it isn't afraid? Is it because the child isn't aware of these things?

4.7.3 So if someone is aware of the bodyguards, and that they have swords, but goes up to him for that very reason, wanting to die because of some circumstance and looking to have it done

easily by someone else—is he afraid of the bodyguards? —Why, he wants the very thing that makes them fearsome. —

4.7.4 So if someone goes up to him wanting neither to die nor to live at all costs, but as it may be granted, what prevents him from going up without fear?

4.7.5 —Nothing. —So if someone feels about his property the way this man feels about his body, and about his children and his wife as well, and in short is so disposed, through some madness or desperation, that it means nothing to him whether he has them or not—but just as children playing with potsherds quarrel about the game and don't care about the potsherds, so he too counts the materials as nothing but embraces the play with them and the handling of them—what tyrant is still fearsome to him, what bodyguards, what swords of theirs?

4.7.6 So someone can be disposed like this toward these things through madness, and the Galileans through habit; and yet no one can learn through reason and demonstration that God has made everything in the world, and the world itself as a whole, unhindered and complete in itself, and its parts for the use of the whole?[14]

4.7.7 All other creatures are excluded from being able to understand how it is governed; but the rational animal has the resources to reason about all these things: that it is a part, and what kind of part, and that it is right for the parts to yield to the whole.

4.7.8 Besides this, being by nature noble, great-souled and free, it sees that of the things around it, some are unhindered and up to it, while others are open to hindrance and up to others: unhindered are the things within its choice, open to hindrance those outside its choice.

4.7.9 And that's why, if it considers its own good and advantage to lie only in these, the things that are unhindered and up to it, it will be free, its life flowing smoothly, happy, unharmed, high-

14 The Galileans are probably the Christians, known for facing death without flinching.

minded, pious, grateful to God for everything, never finding fault with anything that happens, never blaming anyone.

4.7.10 But if it considers them to lie in things external and outside its choice, it's bound to be hindered, obstructed, a slave to those who have power over the things it admires and fears;

4.7.11 and it's bound to be impious, since it thinks it's being harmed by God, and unfair, always grabbing more for itself; and it's bound to be abject and mean-spirited as well.

4.7.12 Once you've grasped this, what prevents you from living lightly and easily guided, calmly awaiting everything that can happen and bearing what has already happened?

4.7.13 "Do you want poverty?" Bring it on, and you'll see what poverty is when it gets a good actor.

4.7.14 "Do you want offices?" Bring them on—and the toil too. "Exile, then?" Wherever I go, I'll be fine there; for here too it wasn't because of the place that I was fine, but because of my judgments, which I'll take away with me. No one can take them from me; these alone are mine and can't be taken away, and having them is enough for me, wherever I am and whatever I'm doing.

4.7.15 "But now it's time to die." What do you mean, die? Don't make a tragedy of it, but say it as it is: "Now it's time for the material to return to the things it came together from." And what's terrible about that? Which of the things in the world is going to perish? What new or unaccountable thing is going to happen? Is it for things like these that the tyrant is fearsome?

4.7.16 Is this why the bodyguards' swords seem so big and sharp? That's for others. I've thought it all through; no one has power over me.

4.7.17 I've been set free by God, I know his commands, no one can enslave me any more; I have the liberator I should have, the judges I should have.

4.7.18 "Aren't I master of your body?" So what's that to me? "Of your bit of property?" So what's that to me? "Of exile, or chains?" Again, all these, and my whole poor body itself, I give up to you

whenever you like. Try your power on me and you'll find out how far it reaches.

4.7.19 Whom, then, can I still be afraid of? The chamberlains? Afraid they'll do what? Shut me out? If they find me wanting to go in, let them shut me out. —Then why do you go to the doors? —Because I think it's right for me to join in the game while it lasts.

4.7.20 —Then how is it you aren't shut out? —Because if someone won't receive me, I don't want to go in; I always want what happens instead. For I consider what God wants better than what I want. I'll attach myself to him as his servant and follower; my impulses go with his, my desires go with his, in short my will goes with his. Being shut out doesn't happen to me, only to those who try to force their way in.

4.7.21 Why don't I force my way in, then? Because I know that nothing good is handed out inside to those who go in. But when I hear someone being congratulated because he's honored by Caesar, I say, "What does he get? A judgment of the right kind, along with his governorship? The ability to use a procuratorship, as well?"

4.7.22 "Why should I still push and shove? Someone is scattering dried figs and nuts: the children grab them and fight each other for them; grown men don't, because they think it's a trifle. And if someone scatters potsherds, not even the children grab them."

4.7.23 "Governorships are being handed out: that's for the children. Money: that's for the children. A generalship, a consulship: let the children scramble for them, let them be shut out, be beaten, kiss the hands of the giver, of his slaves; for me it's figs and nuts."

4.7.24 What, then, if as he's throwing them a fig happens to land in your lap? Pick it up and eat it; that far you can value even a fig. But to stoop down and knock someone over, or be knocked over by someone, and flatter those who go in—neither a fig is worth that, nor any other of the things that aren't good, which the philosophers have persuaded me not to think are good.

4.7.25 Show me the bodyguards' swords. "Look how big they are, and how sharp." So what do these big, sharp swords do?

4.7.26 "They kill." And what does a fever do? "Nothing else." And a roof tile? "Nothing else." So do you want me to admire all these, and bow down before them, and go around as the slave of them all?

4.7.27 Heaven forbid! No: once I've learned that what has come into being must also perish, so that the universe doesn't stand still or get obstructed, it no longer makes any difference to me whether a fever does it, or a roof tile, or a soldier. But if I must compare, I know that the soldier will do it with less pain and more quickly.

4.7.28 So when I neither fear anything he can do to me nor desire anything he can provide, why should I still admire him, why still gape at him in awe? Why fear the bodyguards? Why be glad if he talks to me kindly and receives me, and tell others how he talked to me?

4.7.29 Is he Socrates, then, or Diogenes, that his praise should be proof of what I am?

4.7.30 Have I set my heart on imitating his character? No. I keep the game going: I go to him and serve him, as long as he orders nothing stupid or out of keeping. But if he tells me, "Go and fetch Leon of Salamis," I tell him, "Find someone else. I'm not playing any more."

4.7.31 "Take him away." I follow, still playing the game. "But you'll have your head cut off." And will his own head stay on forever? Or yours, you who obey him? "But you'll be thrown out unburied." If I am the corpse, I'll be thrown out. But if I'm something other than the corpse, put it more precisely, the way things really are, and don't try to frighten me.

4.7.32 These things are frightening to children and to fools. But if someone who has once set foot in a philosopher's school doesn't know what he himself is, he deserves to be afraid, and to flatter the man he went on flattering; if he hasn't yet learned that he isn't flesh, or bones, or sinews, but that which uses them, which governs them and understands its impressions.

4.7.33 Yes, but these doctrines make people despise the laws. —And what doctrines make those who adopt them more obedient to the laws? But the law isn't whatever lies in a fool's power.

4.7.34 And yet look how they prepare us to behave as we should even toward these people, since they teach us not to contend with them over anything in which they can beat us.

4.7.35 They teach us to give way over our poor body, to give way over property, over children, [and] parents, brothers: to yield everything, to let everything go. The only exception they make is our judgments, which Zeus himself willed to be each person's own special possession.

4.7.36 What lawlessness is there in that, what stupidity? Where you are superior and stronger, there I give way to you; where I, in turn, am superior, you give way to me. For I have made this my concern, and you haven't.

4.7.37 Your concern is how you'll live in houses with marble floors, how your slave boys and your freedmen in their felt caps will wait on you, how you'll wear clothes that turn heads, how you'll have lots of huntsmen, singers to the lyre, tragic actors.

4.7.38 Do I lay claim to any of that? And you—have you concerned yourself with judgments? With your own reason? Do you know what parts it's made up of, how it's put together, how it's articulated, what powers it has, and of what sort?

4.7.39 Why, then, are you annoyed if someone else, who has studied these things, has more of them than you? —But these are the most important things. —And who stops you from spending your time on them and taking care of them? Who has a better supply of books, of leisure, of people who can help him?

4.7.40 Just turn your attention to these things at some point; give even a little time to your own ruling center. Consider what this thing is that you have, and where it has come from—this thing that uses all the others, tests all the others, chooses and rejects.

4.7.41 But as long as you spend your time on externals, you'll have those as no one else does, and this the way you want to have it: filthy and neglected.

## CHAPTER 8: TO THOSE WHO RUSH TO PUT ON THE PHILOSOPHER'S GARB

*Philosophy is not a cloak and beard; beginners should practice quietly before claiming the name.*

4.8.1 Never praise or blame anyone on grounds that apply to everybody, and don't credit anyone with skill or lack of skill on that basis. That way you'll rid yourselves both of rashness and of malice.

4.8.2 "This man bathes in a hurry." Is he doing wrong, then? Not necessarily.

4.8.3 Then what? He bathes in a hurry. —So is everything done well? —Not at all. What's done from right judgments is done well, and what's done from bad ones is done badly. But until you've grasped the judgment from which someone does each thing, don't praise the act or blame it.

4.8.4 And a judgment isn't easily discerned from externals. "This man's a carpenter." Why? "He uses an adze." So what? "This man's a musician—he sings." And so what? "This man's a philosopher." Why?

4.8.5 "Because he has a rough cloak and long hair." And what do the wandering beggar-priests have? That's why, when people see one of them behaving disgracefully, they say at once, "Look what the philosopher's doing!" But from his disgraceful behavior they should rather have concluded that he's no philosopher.

4.8.6 If the preconception of a philosopher, what he professes, were to have a rough cloak and long hair, they'd be right. But if it's rather that other thing, to be free from error, why don't they strip him of the title, since he doesn't live up to what he professes?

4.8.7 That's how it goes with the other arts. When someone sees a man making a bad job of his ax-work, he doesn't say, "What's the use of carpentry? Look what bad work carpenters do!" He says the exact opposite: "This man's no carpenter—look how badly he uses the ax."

4.8.8 Likewise, if he hears someone singing badly, he doesn't say, "Look how musicians sing," but rather [that] "This man's no musician."

4.8.9 It's only with philosophy that people react like this. When they see someone acting contrary to what a philosopher professes, they don't strip him of the title. Instead they assume he's a philosopher, and then, taking it from the fact that he's behaving disgracefully, they infer that there's no use in practicing philosophy. What's the reason for this?

4.8.10 It's that we respect our preconception of a carpenter, and of a musician, and likewise of the other craftsmen, but not our preconception of a philosopher. Since that one is confused and unarticulated, we judge by externals alone.

4.8.11 And what other art is taken up by putting on a costume and growing your hair, instead of having its own principles, its material, and its end?

4.8.12 What, then, is the philosopher's material? His rough cloak? No: his reason. What is his end? To wear a rough cloak? No: to keep his reason right. What are his principles? Ones about how you grow a long beard or thick hair? No, rather what Zeno says: to know the elements of reason, what sort of thing each of them is, how they fit together with one another, and everything that follows from them.

4.8.13 Won't you, then, first see whether he lives up to what he professes when he behaves disgracefully, and only then find fault with the pursuit? As it is, when you yourself are being sensible, you look at what he seems to you to be doing badly and say, "Look at the philosopher!" (as if it were fitting to call a man who does such things a philosopher), and again, "So this is a philosopher!" But you don't say "Look at the carpenter" when you learn that someone is an adulterer or see him stuffing himself, or "Look at the musician."

4.8.14 So to some extent even you perceive what a philosopher professes, but you slip away from it and get confused for lack of practice.

4.8.15 But even the so-called philosophers themselves go after the thing by way of what anyone can put on. As soon as they've taken up a rough cloak and let their beards grow, they say, "I'm a philosopher."

4.8.16 No one will say "I'm a musician" if he buys a plectrum and a lyre, or "I'm a smith" if he puts on a felt cap and an apron. The costume is made to suit the art, but people take their name from the art, not from the costume.

4.8.17 That's why Euphrates was right to say, "For a long time I tried to keep it hidden that I was practicing philosophy, and this," he says, "did me good. In the first place, I knew that whatever I did well I did not for the spectators but for myself. I ate well for my own sake, I kept my gaze and my walk composed —all for myself and for God."

4.8.18 "Then, just as I was competing alone, so I was also running risks alone. If I did something shameful or unseemly, it wasn't the cause of philosophy that was put at risk, and I didn't harm the public by going wrong as a philosopher."

4.8.19 "That's why people who didn't know what I was aiming at used to wonder how it was that, though I spent my time and lived with all the philosophers, I wasn't one myself."

4.8.20 "And what harm was there in being recognized as a philosopher by what I did, and not by the insignia?" Look how I eat, how I drink, how I sleep, how I bear and forbear, how I cooperate, how I use desire, how I use aversion, how I maintain my relationships, natural or acquired, without confusion and without hindrance: judge me by that, if you can.

4.8.21 But if you're so deaf and blind that you wouldn't even take Hephaestus for a good smith unless you saw the felt cap on his head, what harm is there in going unrecognized by so foolish a judge?

4.8.22 That's how Socrates went unrecognized by most people, and they would come to him asking to be introduced to philosophers.

4.8.23 Did he get annoyed, as we do, and say, "And don't I look like a philosopher to you?" No, he would take them along and

introduce them, content with one thing, being a philosopher, and glad, too, that he wasn't stung at not seeming to be one. For he remembered his own work.

4.8.24 What is the work of a fine and good person? To have lots of students? Not at all. Let those who have made that their business see to it. To work out difficult principles precisely? Others will see to that too.

4.8.25 Where, then, was he somebody, and where did he want to be? Where harm and benefit lie. "If anyone can harm me," he says, "I'm accomplishing nothing. If I wait for someone else to benefit me, I'm nothing. I want something and it doesn't happen: I'm unfortunate."

4.8.26 Into an arena as great as that he challenged anyone at all, and I don't think he would have given way to anyone—by doing what, do you think? By announcing, "This is the sort of man I am"? Far from it: by being that sort of man.

4.8.27 Because, again, this is how a fool and a braggart talks: "I'm free from passion and undisturbed. Make no mistake, people: while you're in turmoil and uproar over things of no value, I alone am rid of all disturbance."

4.8.28 So it isn't enough for you to feel no pain unless you proclaim, "Gather round, all of you with gout, with headaches, with fevers, the lame, the blind, and see how sound I am, free from every affliction"?

4.8.29 That's empty and vulgar—unless, like Asclepius, you can show them straight away how, by being treated, they too will immediately be free of disease, and that's why you're holding up your own health as an example.

4.8.30 That's the sort of person the Cynic is, the one Zeus has judged worthy of the scepter and the diadem, who says, "So that you may see, people, that you're looking for happiness and tranquility not where it is,"

4.8.31 "but where it isn't, look, I have been sent to you by God as an example: I have no property, no house, no wife, no children, not even a mattress, or a tunic, or a pot. And see how healthy I

am. Put me to the test, and if you see that I'm undisturbed, hear the remedies, and what treatment cured me."

4.8.32 Now that is humane and noble. But see whose work it is: Zeus', or of whomever he judges worthy of this service, so that he never lays anything bare before the public by which he himself would make void the testimony he gives in favor of excellence and against externals: "neither did his fair skin turn pale, nor did he wipe / the tears from his cheeks."[15]

4.8.33 And not only that, but he mustn't long for or miss anything, a person or a place or a way of life, as children long for the grape harvest or the holidays. He must be protected everywhere by his self-respect, as others are by walls and doors and doorkeepers.

4.8.34 But as it is, having merely felt some urge toward philosophy, like people with a queasy stomach toward some tidbit they'll soon be sick of, they rush straight for the scepter, for the kingship. He lets his hair grow, takes up the rough cloak, shows his bare shoulder, picks fights with everyone he meets, and if he sees someone in a good heavy cloak, he picks a fight with him.

4.8.35 Man, train through a winter first. Look at your impulse: isn't it that of someone with a queasy stomach, or of a pregnant woman with cravings? First practice not being recognized for who you are. Do philosophy by yourself for a little while.

4.8.36 That's how fruit comes. The seed has to be buried for a time, stay hidden, grow little by little, so that it can come to maturity. But if it puts out its ear before the stalk has formed a joint, it never ripens: it's from a garden of Adonis.[16]

4.8.37 You too are a little plant like that. You've flowered sooner than you should; the winter will scorch you.

4.8.38 See what farmers say about their seeds when warm weather comes before its time. They worry that the seeds will

15 Homer, *Odyssey* 11.529–30, Odysseus describing Achilles' son Neoptolemus inside the Wooden Horse.

16 For the festival of Adonis, women sowed seeds in pots that sprang up fast and withered at once; the "garden of Adonis" was proverbial for what is quick and short-lived.

run riot, and then a single frost will catch them and show them up.

4.8.39 You watch out too, man. You've run riot, you've leapt at a scrap of fame before your time. You think you're somebody, a fool among fools. You'll be frost-bitten; or rather you already are, down at the root, while your top is still flowering a little, and that's why you think you're still alive and flourishing.

4.8.40 Let us, at least, ripen naturally. Why do you strip us bare? Why force us? We can't stand the open air yet. Let the root grow, then put on its first joint, then its second, then its third; and then, in this way, the fruit will force its way out by nature, even if I don't want it to.

4.8.41 For who that has become pregnant with, and full of, such great judgments doesn't sense how ready he is, and set out toward the works that match them?

4.8.42 A bull isn't ignorant of its own nature and readiness when some wild beast appears, and doesn't wait for someone to spur it on; nor does a dog when it sees some wild animal.

4.8.43 And if I have a good man's readiness, am I going to wait for you to make me ready for my proper work? As it is, I don't have it yet, believe me. So why do you want me to wither before my time, as you withered yourself?

### CHAPTER 9: TO A MAN WHO HAD TURNED SHAMELESS

*A former student who has lost his self-respect is urged to fight his way back.*

4.9.1 When you see someone else holding office, set against it the fact that you have the ability not to need office. When you see someone else rich, look at what you have in exchange.

4.9.2 If you have nothing in exchange, you're miserable. But if what you have is not needing wealth, know that you have more, and something worth much more.

4.9.3 Someone else has a beautiful wife; you have not desiring a beautiful wife. Do these seem small things to you? And how much would these very people—the rich, the office-holders, the

men who live with beautiful women—give to be able to despise wealth and office and these very women they love and have won?

4.9.4 Don't you know what the thirst of a man with a fever is like? It's nothing like a healthy man's. The healthy man drinks and his thirst is gone. The other enjoys it for a moment, then feels sick, turns the water into bile, vomits, gets cramps, and is thirstier than ever.

4.9.5 That's what it is like to be rich with desire, to hold office with desire, to sleep with a beautiful woman with desire. Along with it come jealousy, fear of losing it, shameful words, shameful thoughts, disgraceful deeds.

4.9.6 "And what am I losing?" he says. —Man, you used to have self-respect and now you don't. Have you lost nothing? Instead of Chrysippus and Zeno you read Aristides and Evenus. Have you lost nothing? Instead of Socrates and Diogenes you've come to admire the man who can corrupt and seduce the most women.[17]

4.9.7 You want to be handsome, and since you aren't, you do yourself up; you want to show off gleaming clothes to turn women's heads, and if you happen to get hold of some scent, you think you're in heaven.

4.9.8 Before, you didn't give a thought to any of these things, only to where you might find decent talk, a man worth knowing, a noble thought. And so you slept like a man, went out like a man, wore a man's clothes, spoke words fit for a good man. And then you tell me, "I haven't lost anything"?

4.9.9 So people lose nothing but cash? Isn't self-respect lost? Isn't decency lost? Or is it impossible to suffer loss when you lose these?

4.9.10 To you, perhaps, none of these seems a loss any more. But there was a time when this was the only thing you counted as loss and harm, when you were anxious that someone might shake you loose from those words and deeds.

17 Aristides of Miletus wrote the risqué *Milesian Tales*; Evenus of Paros was an elegiac poet, here evidently read for his love poetry.

4.9.11 Look, you've been shaken loose—by no one else, but by yourself. Fight against yourself; claim yourself back for decency, for self-respect, for freedom.

4.9.12 If someone had told you about me that someone was forcing me to commit adultery, to wear clothes like that, to wear perfume, wouldn't you have gone and killed that man with your own hands for abusing me so?

4.9.13 So now won't you come to your own help? And how much easier this help is! You don't have to kill anyone, or tie anyone up, or assault anyone, or go into the marketplace—just talk to yourself, the person most likely to be persuaded, the one no one is more convincing to than you.

4.9.14 And first condemn what's going on. Then, having condemned it, don't despair of yourself, and don't do what spineless people do, who once they've given in, give themselves up altogether and are swept away as if by a current. Learn instead what the wrestling trainers do.

4.9.15 The boy has fallen. "Get up," he says, "and wrestle again, until you've been made strong."

4.9.16 You react like that too. For know that nothing is more tractable than a human soul. You have only to will it, and it's done, it's been set right; just as, on the other hand, you have only to doze off, and it's lost. For both ruin and help come from within.

4.9.17 —And then what good do I get out of it? —And what greater good are you looking for? From shameless you'll become self-respecting, from disorderly orderly, from untrustworthy trustworthy, from dissolute self-controlled.

4.9.18 If you're looking for other things greater than these, go on doing what you're doing. Not even a god can save you any more.

## CHAPTER 10: WHAT WE SHOULD DESPISE AND WHAT WE SHOULD VALUE

*Anxiety concerns externals; the good person cares for his own choice and is ready for death.*

4.10.1 Everyone is at a loss about externals, helpless about externals. "What shall I do? How will it happen? How will it turn out? What if this happens, or that?"

4.10.2 All these are the words of people taken up with things outside their choice. For who says, "How can I avoid assenting to what's false? How can I avoid turning away from the truth?"

4.10.3 If someone is so well endowed by nature as to be anxious about these things, I'll remind him: "Why are you anxious? It's up to you. Rest assured. Don't rush into assent before you've applied the natural standard."

4.10.4 Again, if he's [not] anxious about his desire, that it may turn out unfulfilled and miss its object,

4.10.5 and about his aversion, that it may fall into what it avoids, first of all I'll kiss him, because he has let go of the things that excite others, and their fears, and has thought about his own work, where he himself is.

4.10.6 Then I'll tell him, "If you don't want to desire and fail to get, or to avoid and fall into what you avoid, don't desire anything that belongs to others, and don't avoid anything that isn't up to you. Otherwise you're bound both to fail to get and to fall into what you avoid."

4.10.7 Where's the perplexity in that? Where is there room for "How will it happen?" and "How will it turn out?" and "What if this or that happens?"

4.10.8 Now, isn't what will happen outside your choice? —Yes. —And the essence of good and bad lies in what falls within your choice? —Yes. —So you can deal with every outcome in accordance with nature? Can anyone stop you?

4.10.9 —No one. —Then don't say to me any more, "How will it happen?" However it happens, you'll turn it to good account, and the outcome will be a piece of good fortune for you.

4.10.10 Or what would Heracles have been if he'd said, "How can I keep a great lion from appearing, or a great boar, or savage men?" And what's that to you? If a great boar appears, you'll fight a greater contest; if bad men appear, you'll rid the world of bad men.

4.10.11 —And what if I die in the process? —You'll die a good man, performing a noble action. Since you have to die anyway, you're bound to be found doing something—farming, or digging, or trading, or serving as consul, or suffering from indigestion or diarrhea.

4.10.12 So what do you want to be doing when death finds you? For my part, I'd want it to be some work that is humane, beneficent, for the common good, noble.

4.10.13 And if I can't be found doing things as great as that, then at least what can't be hindered, what is granted to me: correcting myself, perfecting the faculty that makes use of impressions, working at freedom from passion, giving my relationships their due; and, if I'm lucky enough, touching on the third area too, the one concerned with the security of our judgments.

4.10.14 If death overtakes me while I'm engaged in these things, it's enough for me if I can lift up my hands to God and say, "The resources I received from you for perceiving your governance and following it I have not neglected. As far as it lay with me, I haven't disgraced you."

4.10.15 "See how I have used my senses, see how I have used my preconceptions. Have I ever blamed you? Have I been dissatisfied with anything that happened, or wanted it to happen otherwise? Have I transgressed against my relationships?"

4.10.16 "For bringing me into being, I thank you for what you gave. The time I've had the use of your things is enough for me. Take them back again and assign them to whatever place you wish. For they were all yours; you gave them to me."

4.10.17 Isn't it enough to depart in that state? And what life is better or more seemly than the life of a man in that state? What end could be happier?

4.10.18 But for this to happen, you have to put up with no small things, and do without no small things. You can't want to be consul and want this too, be bent on owning land and want this too, look after your wretched slaves and after yourself too.

4.10.19 No: if you want anything that belongs to others, what's yours is lost. That's the nature of the thing: nothing comes for free.

4.10.20 And why be surprised? If you want to be consul, you have to go without sleep, run around, kiss hands, rot away at other people's doors, say many things and do many things unworthy of a free man, send gifts to lots of people, and presents to some every day. And what does it all come to?

4.10.21 Twelve bundles of rods, sitting on the tribunal three or four times, putting on games in the Circus, and handing out dinners in little baskets. Or let someone show me what there is besides that.[18]

4.10.22 So for the sake of freedom from passion, for the sake of tranquility, of sleeping when you sleep and being awake when you're awake, of fearing nothing, of being anxious about nothing, you're not willing to spend anything, or put in any work?

4.10.23 But if something of yours gets lost while you're occupied with these things, or is wasted, or someone else gets what you should have got, will you [not] be stung straight away at what's happened?

4.10.24 Won't you set against it what you're getting in exchange for what, and how much for how much? Or do you want to get such great things for nothing? And how can you?

4.10.25 One job for another. You can't have both your externals well looked after and your own ruling center. If you want those, let this go. Otherwise you'll have neither this nor those, pulled in both directions. If you want this, you have to let those go.

4.10.26 The oil will be spilled, my bits of furniture will be lost, but I'll be free from passion. There'll be a fire while I'm out, and my books will be lost, but I'll use my impressions in accordance with nature. But I won't have anything to eat.

18 The "little baskets" are the food handouts given to clients.

4.10.27 If I'm as badly off as that, dying is a harbor. And this is everyone's harbor, death; this is the refuge. That's why nothing in life is hard.

4.10.28 Whenever you want, you're out, and the smoke doesn't bother you. So why are you anxious? Why do you lie awake? Why don't you work out at once where your good and bad lie, and say, "Both are up to me. No one can take this away from me, or plunge me into that against my will"?

4.10.29 "So why don't I lie down and snore? What's mine is safe. As for what belongs to others, whoever carries it off will see to it, as it's granted by the one who has authority over it."

4.10.30 "Who am I to want them to be this way or that? Have I been given the choice of them? Has anyone made me their steward? It's enough for me to have the things I have authority over. These I must put in the best possible order; the rest, as their master wishes."

4.10.31 Does anyone who has these things before his eyes lie awake and toss and turn this way and that? Wanting what, or longing for what? For Patroclus, or Antilochus, or Menelaus? When did he ever think any of his friends immortal? When didn't he have it before his eyes that tomorrow or the day after either he or his friend must die?[19]

4.10.32 "Yes," he says, "but I thought he'd outlive me and bring up my son." That's because you were a fool, and counted on what was uncertain. So why don't you blame yourself, instead of sitting there crying like a little girl?

4.10.33 "But he used to set my food before me." Because he was alive, you fool. Now he can't. But Automedon will serve you, and if Automedon dies too, you'll find someone else.[20]

4.10.34 And if the pot your meat used to be cooked in breaks, do you have to die of hunger because you don't have your usual pot? Won't you send out and buy another, a new one? "Nothing else,"

19 The allusion is to Achilles in the *Iliad*, tossing sleepless after the death of his friend Patroclus; Antilochus and Menelaus were among his companions at Troy.
20 Automedon was Achilles' charioteer.

4.10.35 he says, "could I suffer that is worse." So this is a bad thing to you? And then, instead of setting about removing it, you blame your mother for not warning you, so that you could have been grieving from then on?[21]

4.10.36 What do you think? Didn't Homer compose this on purpose, so that we might see that the noblest, the strongest, the richest, the handsomest, when they don't have the judgments they should, are no less liable to be the most wretched and unfortunate of all?

## CHAPTER 11: ON CLEANLINESS

*Cleanliness of body, after purity of judgments, keeps a philosopher from repelling others.*

4.11.1 Some people dispute whether sociability is part of human nature. And yet I don't think even these very people would dispute that cleanliness, at any rate, is certainly part of it, and that if anything sets us apart from the other animals, this does.

4.11.2 So when we see some other animal cleaning itself, we tend to remark in surprise, "Just like a human!" And again, if someone complains about some animal, we tend to say straight away, as if apologizing for it, "Well, it isn't human, after all."

4.11.3 So we think there's something special about human beings here, and we get it in the first place from the gods. For since they are by nature pure and undefiled, to the extent that human beings have come near them through reason, to that extent they cling to purity and cleanliness.

4.11.4 But since it's impossible for human substance to be entirely pure, blended as it is from such material, reason, once taken on, tries as far as possible to make it clean.

4.11.5 The first and highest purity, then, is the one that arises in the soul, and likewise impurity. You wouldn't find impurity of the soul in the way you'd find impurity of the body. As for the

21 The line is Achilles' lament for Patroclus (*Iliad* 19.321); his mother is the goddess Thetis.

soul's impurity, what else would you find but what makes it filthy with respect to its own works?

4.11.6 And the works of the soul are impulse, repulsion, desire, aversion, preparing, purposing, assenting.

4.11.7 What is it, then, that makes the soul filthy and impure in these works? Nothing other than its bad judgments.

4.11.8 So the soul's impurity is wicked judgments, and its purification is the instilling of the judgments it should have. And the pure soul is the one that has the judgments it should, since this alone is free from confusion and pollution in its own works.

4.11.9 And we should work at something like this with the body too, as far as possible. It was impossible for a human being's nose not to run, given the mixture he's made of; that's why nature made hands, and the nostrils themselves like pipes, to let the fluids out. So if someone sniffs it back up, I say he isn't doing what a human being does.

4.11.10 It was impossible for our feet not to get muddy, and dirty generally, walking through the sort of things we walk through; that's why nature has provided water, that's why she has provided hands.

4.11.11 It was impossible for some dirt not to stay on the teeth from eating; that's why she says, "Wash your teeth." Why? So that you may be a human being, and not a wild beast or a piglet.

4.11.12 It is impossible for something dirty, in need of cleaning, not to be left on the body from sweat and the chafing of clothes; that's why there are water, oil, hands, towel, scraper, soda, and at times every other kind of equipment for cleaning it.

4.11.13 No? The smith [as a smith] will clean the rust off his iron and have tools made for the purpose, and you yourself will wash your plate when you're going to eat, unless you're utterly unclean and filthy; but you won't wash your poor body or make it clean?

4.11.14 —Why should I? he says. —I'll tell you again: first, so that you may act as a human being; and then, so as not to offend the people you meet.

4.11.15 You're doing something like that here too, without noticing. You think you deserve to smell. All right, suppose you deserve it. Do the people sitting next to you deserve it too, the people reclining beside you at dinner, the people who kiss you?

4.11.16 Either go off into some wilderness, which is what you deserve, and spend your life alone, reeking of yourself. It's only just that you should be the only one to enjoy your filth. But living in a city and behaving so thoughtlessly and inconsiderately —what sort of person does that seem to you?

4.11.17 If nature had entrusted a horse to you, would you have ignored it and left it uncared for? Well, now think of your body as handed over to you like a horse. Wash it, rub it down, make sure no one turns away from you, no one steps out of your path.

4.11.18 And who doesn't step out of the path of a filthy, smelly, sallow person even more than of someone smeared with dung? That smell is from outside and put on; but the one from neglect comes from within, as if from something rotten through.

4.11.19 But Socrates rarely bathed. —But his body was radiant; he was so attractive and pleasant that the handsomest and noblest young men were in love with him and wanted to recline beside him rather than beside the best-looking. He could have gone without bathing or washing, if he'd wanted to; and yet even his rare bathing had its effect. And if you don't want hot water, use cold.

4.11.20 —But Aristophanes speaks of "the pale ones, the barefoot ones," I mean. —Yes, and he also says Socrates walks on air, and steals clothes from the wrestling school.[22]

4.11.21 For all who have written about Socrates testify to the very opposite: that he was pleasant not only to listen to but also to look at. And again, they write the same about Diogenes.

4.11.22 For one shouldn't scare the public away from philosophy even by the look of one's body. One should show oneself cheerful and undisturbed in everything else, and in one's body as well.

22 In his comedy *Clouds* (423 BC), Aristophanes caricatured Socrates and his pupils as pale, barefoot, and thieving.

4.11.23 "Look, people, I have nothing, I need nothing. See how, without a house, without a city, an exile if it so happens, without a hearth, I live more free from disturbance and with a smoother flow of life than all the nobles and the rich. And look at my poor body too: you can see it isn't harmed by my austere way of life."

4.11.24 But if someone tells me this with the bearing and face of a condemned man, which of the gods will persuade me to take up philosophy, if this is the kind of person it produces? Heaven forbid! I wouldn't want to, not even if I were going to become wise.

4.11.25 By the gods, I would rather a young man who is first feeling the urge came to me with his hair carefully styled than wasted and filthy. For in him one sees some impression of beauty, a longing for what is seemly; and where he imagines it to be, there he takes pains.

4.11.26 All that's left is to show him and say, "Young man, you're looking for beauty, and you do well. Know, then, that it grows where your reason is. Look for it there, where your impulses and repulsions are, where your desires and aversions are."

4.11.27 "For this is what you have as something special within you; your poor body is by nature clay. Why labor over it for nothing? If nothing else, time will teach you that it is nothing."

4.11.28 But if he comes to me smeared with dung, filthy, with a mustache down to his knees, what can I say to him? From what resemblance can I lead him on?

4.11.29 For what has he been serious about that resembles beauty, so that I can redirect him and say, "Beauty isn't here, but here"? Do you want me to tell him, "Beauty doesn't lie in being smeared with dung, but in reason"? Does he aspire to beauty? Does he have any glimmer of it? Go and argue with a pig, to stop it wallowing in the mud!

4.11.30 That's why Xenocrates' words took hold of Polemo too: he was a young man who loved beauty. He came in with sparks of enthusiasm for beauty, but he was looking for it elsewhere.

4.11.31 Indeed, nature didn't even make the animals that live alongside humans dirty. Does a horse roll in the mud? Does a

well-bred dog? No, but the pig does, and the filthy geese, and worms, and spiders—the creatures banished farthest from human company.

4.11.32 So you, a human being, don't even want to be one of the animals that live alongside humans, but would rather be a worm or a spider? Won't you have a bath sometime, somewhere, however you like? Won't you wash yourself off? Won't you come clean, so that the people you're with can enjoy your company? But you even come into the temples with us like that, where it isn't done to spit or blow your nose—you, who are nothing but spit and snot?

4.11.33 What, then? Is anyone asking you to prettify yourself? Heaven forbid—except for what we are by nature: our reason, our judgments, our activities. As for the body, only to the point of cleanliness, only so as not to give offense.

4.11.34 But if you hear that you shouldn't wear scarlet, go and smear your rough cloak with dung, or tear it to shreds! —But where am I to get a nice rough cloak? —Man, you have water: wash it.

4.11.35 Look, a young man worthy of love! Look, an old man worthy to love and be loved in return, to whom someone might hand over his son to be placed, to whom daughters, to whom young men will come, if it so happens—so that he can give his lectures on a dung heap!

4.11.36 Heaven forbid! Every aberration springs from something human; this one comes close to not being human at all.

## CHAPTER 12: ON ATTENTION

*Relaxing attention even briefly breeds a habit of carelessness that is hard to break.*

4.12.1 When you relax your attention for a little while, don't imagine that you'll get it back whenever you like. Keep this at hand instead: that because of today's mistake, things are bound to go worse for you in everything else.

4.12.2 For first, the worst habit of all takes root, the habit of not paying attention; and then the habit of putting attention off. And you get used to postponing, always to one time after another, the smooth flow of life, seemliness, being and living in accordance with nature.

4.12.3 Now, if putting it off is profitable, giving up attention altogether is more profitable still. And if it isn't profitable, why don't you keep your attention up continuously?

4.12.4 "Today I want to play." Then what stops you from doing it with attention? "To sing." Then what stops you from doing it with attention? Is some part of life exempt, one that attention doesn't extend to? Will you do it worse by paying attention, and better by not paying attention?

4.12.5 And what else in life is done better by people who don't pay attention? Does the carpenter who doesn't pay attention ? Does the helmsman who doesn't pay attention steer more safely? Is any other of the lesser tasks done better through inattention?

4.12.6 Don't you realize that once you let your mind go, it's no longer up to you to call it back—to seemliness, to self-respect, to composure? Instead you do whatever comes into your head; you follow your whims.

4.12.7 What, then, should I pay attention to? —First, to those general principles: keep them at hand, and don't sleep, or get up, or drink, or eat, or deal with people without them. That no one is master of another's choice, and that in choice alone lie good and bad.

4.12.8 So no one has the power either to procure me good or to involve me in bad; I alone have authority over myself in these matters.

4.12.9 So when these things are secure for me, why should I be disturbed about externals? What tyrant is frightening, what disease, what poverty, what setback?

4.12.10 —But I didn't please so-and-so. —Well, is he my work? Is he my judgment? —No. —Then why do I still care? —But he seems to be somebody. —

4.12.11 He'll see to that himself, and so will those who think so. But I have the one I must please, whom I must submit to, whom I must obey: God, and after him

4.12.12 he has entrusted me to myself, and has subjected my choice to me alone, giving me standards for its right use. When I follow them, in syllogisms I pay no attention to anyone who says anything different, and in shifting arguments I don't care about anyone. Why, then, in greater matters do my critics upset me?

4.12.13 What is the cause of this disturbance? Nothing other than that I'm untrained in this area.

4.12.14 For every science looks down on ignorance and the ignorant, and not only the sciences but the arts too. Take any shoemaker you like: he laughs at ordinary people when it comes to his own work. Take any carpenter you like.

4.12.15 So first, keep these things at hand and do nothing without them, but keep your soul intent on this target: to pursue nothing external, nothing that belongs to others, but, as the one who has the power has ordained, the things within our choice at all costs, and the rest as they're given.

4.12.16 And on top of that, to remember who we are and what our name is, and to try to direct our duties according to what our relationships call for:

4.12.17 when is the right time for singing, when for play, and with whom present; what will come of the thing; whether our companions will despise us, whether we'll despise them; when to joke, and whom to laugh at, and on what occasion to go along with others, and with whom; and then, in going along, how to keep one's own character. Wherever you swerve from any of these, there's loss straight away,

4.12.18 not from somewhere outside, but from the activity itself.

4.12.19 What, then? Is it possible to be faultless now? Impossible; but this much is possible: to be continually intent on not going wrong. For we must be content if, by never relaxing this attention, we escape at least a few errors. But as it is, when you say

4.12.20 "I'll pay attention tomorrow," know that what you're saying is: "Today I'll be shameless, tactless, abject; it'll be in others' power to upset me; today I'll get angry, I'll be envious."

4.12.21 Look at all the bad things you're allowing yourself. But if it's good for you tomorrow, how much better today! If it's advantageous tomorrow, much more so today, so that you can manage it tomorrow too, and not put it off again to the day after.

## CHAPTER 13: TO THOSE WHO READILY DISCLOSE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS

*Do not share your secrets just because others have shared theirs; trust needs sound judgments.*

4.13.1 When someone seems to us to have spoken frankly about his own affairs, somehow we too get drawn into disclosing our secrets to him, and we think this is being frank.

4.13.2 First, because it seems unfair to have heard our neighbor's affairs without giving him a share of ours in return. Then, because we think we'll give the impression of not being frank people if we keep quiet about our own affairs.

4.13.3 Indeed, people often say, "I've told you everything about myself, and you won't tell me anything about yourself? Where's that ever done?"

4.13.4 There's also the idea that we can safely trust someone who has already trusted us with his own affairs. The thought steals over us that this man would never divulge our affairs, since he'd be wary of our divulging his.

4.13.5 That's also how rash people get caught by the soldiers in Rome. A soldier in civilian clothes sits down beside you and starts running down Caesar. Then you, as if you'd received a pledge of good faith from him in the fact that he started the abuse, say everything you think yourself; and then you're chained up and led away.

4.13.6 Something like that happens to us generally too. For it doesn't follow that, because he has safely trusted his affairs to me, I can likewise safely trust mine to just anyone.

4.13.7 No: I hear, and keep quiet, if I'm that sort of person; but he goes out and blabs to everyone. Then, when I find out what's happened, if I'm like him myself, I want revenge, and I blab his affairs, and I make a mess of things and am in a mess myself.

4.13.8 But if I remember that one person doesn't harm another, but that each is harmed and benefited by his own actions, I manage at least not to do anything like what he did; but all the same, I've suffered what I've suffered through my own chatter.

4.13.9 Yes, but it's unfair, when you've heard your neighbor's secrets, not to share any of your own with him in return.

4.13.10 —Did I ask you to, man? Did you disclose your affairs on certain terms, so that you'd hear mine in return?

4.13.11 If you're a chatterbox and think everyone you meet is a friend, do you want me to become like you too? And what if you did well to trust me with your affairs, but it isn't possible to trust you safely? Do you want me to act rashly?

4.13.12 It's as if I had a sound jar and you a leaky one, and you came and deposited your wine with me to put in my jar, and then got annoyed that I didn't trust you with my own wine too. You've got a leaky jar!

4.13.13 So how is that equal any more? You deposited with someone trustworthy, someone with self-respect, who thinks his own actions alone harmful and beneficial, and nothing external;

4.13.14 do you want me to deposit with you, a man who has dishonored his own choice, who wants to get a bit of cash, or some office, or promotion at court, even if you're going to butcher your children, like Medea?

4.13.15 Where's the equality in that? But show me that you're trustworthy, self-respecting, steady; show me that you have the judgments of a friend; show me that your vessel isn't leaky, and you'll see how I won't wait for you to trust me with your affairs, but will come myself and ask you to hear mine.

4.13.16 For who doesn't want to use a good vessel? Who scorns a well-disposed and trustworthy adviser? Who wouldn't gladly welcome someone who'll share his troubles as if sharing a load, and lighten it for him by that very sharing?

4.13.17 Yes, but I trust you, and you don't trust me. —First of all, you don't trust me either; you're a chatterbox, and that's why you can't hold anything in. Because if that's how it is, trust your affairs to me alone;

4.13.18 but as it is, whenever you see someone at leisure, you sit down beside him and say, "Brother, I have no one more kindly disposed to me or dearer than you; please hear my affairs." And you do this with people you don't know in the slightest.

4.13.19 And even if you do trust me, it's obviously because you take me for trustworthy and self-respecting, not because I've told you my affairs.

4.13.20 So let me think the same way too. Show me that if someone tells another person his affairs, that makes him trustworthy and self-respecting. If that were so, I'd go around telling everyone my affairs, if that was going to make me trustworthy and self-respecting. But that's not how it is: it takes judgments, and not just any judgments.

4.13.21 At any rate, if you see someone who is serious about things outside his choice and has subordinated his own choice to them, know that this man has countless people who can compel him, who can hinder him.

4.13.22 He doesn't need pitch or the wheel to make him tell what he knows. A little nod from some slave girl, if it so happens, will shake it out of him, a friendly word from one of Caesar's people, a desire for office, or for an inheritance, and thirty thousand other things like these.

4.13.23 So remember, as a general rule, that confidential talk requires trustworthiness and judgments to match; and where can these easily be found nowadays?

4.13.24 Or let someone show me a man in such a state that he says, "I care only for what is my own, what can't be hindered, what is free by nature. This is what I hold to be the essence of the good; let everything else happen as it's given. It makes no difference to me."