

**Ragavan IYER (ed.) (1983): THE GOLDEN VERSES OF PYTHAGORAS:
With the Commentary of Hierocles, Concord Grove Press, N.Y.**

For many in the Western world, Pythagoras is remembered as a Greek mathematician who discovered that in a right angled triangle, the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the opposite two sides. His true influence and stature, however, continue to be acknowledged by a small number of cultural historians, mystics, and musicians throughout the world. His "Golden Verses" offer much insight into the sublimity and wisdom embodied in this great philosopher.

His wisdom did not arise in a void. As a young man, Pythagoras traveled throughout Greece before making his way to Egypt where he spent over a decade visiting the "Pir Ankh" or Houses of Learning. The "Pir Ankh" were repositories where ordained guardians preserved and transmitted the accumulated knowledge of all the Egyptian arts and sciences. Pythagoras is said to have then studied under Zoroaster in Babylon before setting up his own philosophical community and school at Croton in Southern Italy, where he lived for over twenty years.

The Verses themselves represent a poetic rendition of principles which, when lived, enable one to regain the innate sublimity and luminosity that are too often over-ridden by dailiness and the vicissitudes of an unreflective and often unconscious life. Therein are contained many proverbs and axioms that carry great truth. The Verses represent a dense and compact religious and moral teaching attained in an age which many in present time foolishly believe to have been coarse and impoverished.

There are many resonances in these Verses with the core teachings of the major world religions. It is unfortunate that Western positivist education sees fit only to identify this great teacher of humanity with an obscure geometrical theorem, rather than engaging young students with the life enhancing principles that deeply permeate his broader teachings.

PYTHAGORAS AND HIS SCHOOL

Pythagoras (~582 B.C. - 507 B.C.) was revered in India as Pitar Guru, Father and Teacher, and as Yavanacharya, the Ionian philosopher. He was known by other names in ancient Egypt where he spent twenty years in preparation before, at the age of fifty-six, he founded the School at Crotona in Magna Graecia. p 6

According to Pythagorean teaching in the *Golden Verses*, any person can come to show fearlessness in relation to fate, having already acquired a mature self-respect that is rooted in an understanding and a reverence for all of life.

Self-respect means here very much more than in current usage and in our ordinary languages. It is the key to what is in the *Golden Verses* about proper self-examination, which is an activity very different from offering a confessional before a priest, or going to a psychiatrist and having oneself analysed, or engaging in one or another

form of tedious, furtive and repressive discussion of the shadow. p 7

The teaching of Pythagoras was also that of the Buddha and later on of Shankara. Two thousand five hundred years ago the Buddha taught his disciples first to become *shravakas*, listeners. When they had spent a sufficient time in listening and learning, as in the earlier Hindu tradition with its emphasis upon *brahmacharya*, a period of probation, then they could become *shramanas*, men of action. We find this also in the Pythagorean tradition, where neophytes are *acousticoi*, those who listen. This has reference not to something mechanical or rigid and therefore false, but to a balanced training in the art of perfecting through wisdom the conservation of energy.

p 11

There are desires which, though not unfitting to start with and though not vehement, become inappropriate in expression. A person might have a legitimate desire and a sense of proportion about it but not know how to express it appropriately, and hence become the frequent victim of bad timing. Bad timing is like bad faith, betokening a lack of total commitment and engagement in one's own project, to use Sartrean language. One is never quite there when needed but is always just that bit ill-timed. After a point one gathers around oneself elemental forces that become an ill-omened angel of misfortune.

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THE COMMENTARY OF HIEROCLES ON THE GOLDEN VERSES

For this science, therefore, which ought to render us pure and perfect, it is good to have short and certain rules as so many aphorisms of the art, that by their means we may arrive methodically and in due order at happiness, which is our only end.

Amongst all the rules that contain a summary of Philosophy, the Verses of Pythagoras, called the *Golden Verses*, justly hold the first rank, for they contain the general precepts of all Philosophy regarding the *active* as well as the *contemplative* life. . . . As is said in the *Timaeus* of Plato (whom we ought to regard as a very exact master of the doctrine of Pythagoras). after having regained his health and recovered his integrity and his perfection, he may see himself again in his primitive state of innocence and of light.

p 21

1. In the first place revere the Immortal Gods, as they are established and ordained by the Law.

The beings that hold the first rank in this world are the pure Image of what is most excellent in God; those that hold the middle rank are the middle Image of what is middling in God; and those that hold the third, the last rank among the rational Beings, are the last Image of what is last in the Divinity. The first of these Orders is here called the *Immortal Gods*, the second *Heroes who are full of goodness and light*, and the third *Terrestrial Daimons*, as we shall see hereafter. . . .

The Law is the Intelligence that has created all things; it is the Divine Intelligence by which all has been produced from all eternity and which likewise preserves it eternally. p 25

Whatever we love, we imitate as much as we can, and the reverence we offer to Him who has no need of anything consists in receiving the good things He offers us. For thou dost not honour God by giving Him anything but by rendering thyself worthy to receive from Him, and as the Pythagoreans say: *Thou wilt honour God perfectly if thou behave thyself so that thy soul may become His Image.* . .

He alone knows how to revere who never confounds the dignity of those he honours. He offers himself first as a pure sacrifice, renders his soul the Image of God, and prepares his mind as a temple worthy to receive the Divine Light. p 27

2. Reverence the Oath

By the *Oath* in this place is meant only the observance of the Divine Laws and the bond by which all created Beings are linked to God the Creator to the end that they may know Him. p 28

Now the most certain way to preserve this respect [that which the majesty of an oath requires] inviolably is not to make use of oaths frequently nor rashly, nor by chance, nor for things of little concern, nor as an ornament of discourse, nor the more to ascertain what you say, but to reserve it for things necessary and honourable and for those occasions only where there appears to be no other way of safety for you in your affairs than by the truth of an oath. And the only way to convince all that hear us of the truth of what we affirm is so to behave ourselves that our manners may agree with our oaths, and not give our neighbour any cause to suspect that we are capable of preferring any temporal advantage whatsoever to truth, whether we have or have not obligated ourselves by an oath. p 29

3. In the next place revere the Heroes who are full of goodness and light

These are the middle sort of the Intelligent Essences, and holding the next place after the *Immortal Gods*, they precede human nature and join the last Beings to the first. p 30

According to these three senses, we divide into three classes all those middle Spirits. Those that approach the nearest to the Celestial and Divine Essences we call *Angels*: those that are united to the Terrestrial Essences we call *Heroes*; and those that hold the middle place, equally distant from the two extremes, we call *Daimons*, as Plato frequently divides them. p 31

They are not born of mortal race but are produced by their uniform and only Cause as light comes from the Essence of a luminous body (I mean a pure and clear light), after which it is easy to imagine a light full of shades and blended with darkness. And to this obscure and dim light analogically answers the third kind of Beings. I mean

mankind, by reason of the proneness they have to vice and to oblivion, which makes them incapable of contemplating God always. p 32

Now every man that loves God ought likewise to love every Being that in any way resembles Him, whether it has possessed this likeness from all eternity or has acquired it in time, such as those men who have distinguished themselves by the pre-eminence of their virtues. p 32

4. Honour likewise the Terrestrial Daimons by rendering them the worship lawfully due to them.

This name of *Terrestrial Daimon* is applicable only to him who, being man by nature, is become *Daimon* by habitude, by his union with and knowledge of the things relating to God. . . .

This Verse, therefore, commands us to respect and revere the men who have been admitted into the Celestial Orders and who may be considered as equal to the *Daimons*, to the *Angels* and to the *Heroes*. p 33

This worship consists only in obeying the precepts they have left us and in regarding those precepts as Laws that must not be violated; to take example by their way of living; and to walk in the paths they walked in, which envy could never hinder them from teaching us, and which they have transmitted to their successors with ten thousand toils and labours as the immortal inheritance of their Fathers by consigning to us in their writings the elements of virtue and the maxims of truth. pp 33-34

5. Honour likewise thy father and thy mother, and thy nearest relations.

How, then, shall we honour them? Shall we behave as they would have us, so as neither to think nor do anything but what will please them? In this way our zeal for virtue will degenerate into zeal for vice if our parents and relations happen to be wicked and vicious. But on the other hand, shall we neglect and condemn them because we know them to be vicious? p 34

In all other things we ought to honour our parents to the utmost of our power and without any limitation, by serving them ourselves and by supplying them abundantly with all our heart with the things they have need of. For it is most reasonable they should rely upon those to whom they gave life and learning. p 35

6. Of all the rest of mankind, make him thy friend who distinguishes himself by his virtue.

As we were told that we ought to honour and revere only those who are full of knowledge and light, so likewise we are told that we ought to contract friendship with none but men of probity and virtue. As to these we are allowed the liberty of choice; as to our parents and relations we are confined to obey the dictates of Nature, for a

father or a brother naturally claims our respect. But as for others - I mean our friends - it is virtue only that makes them valuable, in the same manner that it gives merit to the dead. pp 36-37

7 - 9. Always give ear to his mild exhortations, and take example from his virtuous and useful actions. Refrain, as far as you can, from spurning thy friend for a slight fault, for power surrounds necessity.

It is for our mutual good that the Law of Friendship binds us together, to the end that our friends may assist us in the increase of virtue and that we may reciprocally assist them in their improvement therein. For as fellow travelers in the way that leads to a better life, we ought, for our common advantage, to impart to them the good things we may discover, perhaps better than they. p 37

It is a true saying that *the wise man hates no one*, not even the wicked, and inasmuch as he courts the virtuous to communicate and impart themselves to him, he selects above all the most perfect for the object of his affections.

9 - 10. Know that all these things are as I have told thee. Accustom thyself to surmount and vanquish these passions: First, gluttony, sloth, lust and anger.

We ought, therefore, to know our duties and accustom, as much as we can, our brutal and sensual faculties to be obedient to the Reason that is in us. For the passions being thus kept in subjection, Reason will be in a condition to observe inviolably the first precepts, concerning which we are told in this place: *Know that all these things are as I have told thee.* p 41

11 - 12. Never commit any shameful actions, neither with others nor in private with thyself. Above all things, respect thyself.

If thou gain a habit of respecting thyself, thou wilt always have at hand a faithful guardian whom thou wilt respect, who will never depart far from thee but always keep thee in sight. For it has often happened that many, after their friends and domestics had left them, have taken the liberty to do such things which they would have been ashamed to have done in their presence. . . .

Establish thyself, then, for thine own guard and thine own inspector, and keeping the eyes of thine understanding always fixed on this faithful guardian, begin to have an abhorrence of vice. p 42

13 - 16. In the next place, observe Justice in thy actions and in thy words; and accustom not thyself to behave thyself in anything without rule and without reason Always make this reflection, that it is ordained by Destiny for all men to die; and that the goods of fortune are uncertain. As they may be acquired, they may likewise be lost.

Now there are several sorts of vices: the vice of the rational part is folly; of the irascible, cowardice; the vices of the concupiscible are intemperance and avarice; and the vice that extends itself through all the faculties is injustice.

To avoid, therefore, all these vices we have need of four virtues: of prudence for the rational faculty; of courage for the irascible; of temperance for the concupiscible; and for all these faculties together we have need of justice, which is the most perfect of all the virtues, and being the chief of all, includes the rest as its proper parts.

Prudence never quarrels with Destiny, nor, because the mortal body dies, concludes therefrom that there is no such thing as Providence. She knows that it is ordained by Fate for all men to die; that there is a time prefixed for the duration of this mortal body; and that when our last moment is arrived, we ought not to repine, but submit voluntarily to it as to the Law of God. For that Law is properly what is meant by the word *Destiny*. It signifies that God Himself has by His decrees destined and prescribed necessary limits to this mortal life beyond which no man can pass, and it is the nature of prudence to follow the decrees of God, not by desiring not to die, but by endeavouring to die well. p 44

The design of these Verses is to produce in the soul of those that read them these four practical virtues, with an exact and watchful observance of them both in word and deed. For one of these virtues inspires prudence, another courage, a third temperance, and that which precedes the three exhorts us to practise Justice, which diffuses itself through all the other virtues. pp 46-47

Good men seem to be much more unhappy in this life than the wicked because they take not unjustly from any man what they ought not to take, and because they pay every man what is his due. Moreover, with regard to the body, the good man is more exposed to ill-usage because he seeks not after rule and dominion and does not slavishly court those that govern. p 47

17 - 20. Concerning all the calamities that men suffer by Divine Fortune, support with patience thy lot, be what it will, and never repine at it, but endeavour what thou canst to remedy it, and consider that Fate does not send the greatest portion of these misfortunes to good men.

The real ills are the sins we commit voluntarily and of our own free choice, and which are incompatible with virtue, such as injustice, intemperance, and all the other things that can in no way be united, matched or reconciled with what is good, well, fine or decent. p 48

Speaking of voluntary evils, he does not say that they are distributed by *Divine Fortune*, but he says it of the ills that are exterior and conditional, that do not depend on us in this life, but are the effects of the sins we formerly committed. These ills are indeed painful and calamitous, as we have said already, but they may receive a lustre and ornament from the hands of virtue. p 49

It is not our will alone that disposes of and determines all the actions of our life; but all the sins we commit are imputed to our will, and all the punishments that follow these sins, according to the Laws of Justice, are ascribed to Destiny. The good things that God bestows beforehand and without our previous merit are attributed to Providence, for nothing that exists is referred to chance. p 50

21 - 23. There are amongst men several sorts of reasonings, good and bad. Admire them not too easily and reject them not either, but if any falsehoods be advanced, give way with mildness and arm thyself with patience.

24 - 26. Observe well, on every occasion, what I am going to tell thee: Let no man either by his words, or by his actions, ever seduce thee, nor entice thee to say or to do what is not profitable for thee.

The man who neither alone nor in company will dare to commit the least shameful action, but out of respect for the Reason he has within him and to whose government and conduct he has resigned himself, banishes the very thoughts of such actions, he alone, I say, is in a condition to obey this precept: *Let no man either by his words, or by his actions, ever seduce thee.* He alone is incapable of being cheated and misled who, having a due sense of his own nobility and dignity, does not allow himself to be cajoled by flatteries nor intimidated by threats, whatever means are used for that purpose either by his friends or by his enemies. The words *no man* include all men, whether they be a father, a tyrant, a friend, an enemy. p 52

27 - 29. Consult and deliberate before thou act, that thou may'st not commit foolish actions, for it is the part of a miserable man to speak and act without reflection. But do that which will not afflict thee afterwards, nor oblige thee to repentance.

There are three sensible effects of wise deliberation: First, the choice of the best life; secondly, the practice of the life we have chosen; and thirdly, a constant and exact observance of what we had well and wisely resolved upon. p 55

Repentance is the beginning of Philosophy, the avoiding of all foolish words and actions, and the first step of a life that will no more be subject to repentance. p 56

To obey sound Reason and to obey God are the same thing, since our Intelligent part is enlightened by the irradiation that is natural and proper to it and wills nothing but what the Law of God requires. A soul well disposed according to God is always of the same mind with God, and whatever it does, it keeps the divinity and splendid brightness that surround it always in sight; . . . p 57

30 - 31. Never do anything which thou dost not understand; but learn all thou oughtest to know, and by that means thou wilt lead a pleasant life.

Nothing deserves to be learnt except that which brings us to the Divine Likeness; inclines us to deliberate before we act; puts us in a condition not to be deceived and misled by any man, either by his words or by his actions; enables us to discern the difference in the reasons and arguments which we hear; makes us bear with patience the *Divine Fortune* and that supplies us with means to mend it; teaches us not to dread death and poverty, and to practise Justice; makes us temperate in all things that are called pleasures; instructs us in the Laws of Friendship and the respect due to those that gave us life; and lastly, shows us the honour and the worship we ought to render to the superior Beings. pp 58-59

If we do any shameful thing with pleasure, the pleasure passes but the shame remains. But if we do any good thing with a thousand toils, a thousand difficulties, the toils and difficulties will all vanish and be forgotten and the good alone will remain with us. p 60

32 - 34. In no wise neglect the health of thy body; but give it food and drink in due measure, and also the exercise of which it has need. By measure, I mean what will not incommode thee.

35 - 38. Accustom thyself to a way of living that is neat and decent, without luxury. Avoid all things that will occasion envy, and be not expensive out of season, like one who knows not what is decent and honourable. Be neither covetous nor niggardly. A due measure is excellent in these things!

By ordering our life in this manner we shall gain another great advantage by avoiding the envy that always attends extremes, since by running headlong into excess in all things, we provoke our neighbours sometimes to hate us for our luxury, sometimes to complain of our slovenliness, now to accuse us of prodigality, and then to reproach us for stinginess and meanness of soul. All these excesses make us alike incur the blame of those amongst whom we live. p 63

39. Do only the things that cannot hurt thee, and deliberate before thou doest them.

40 - 44. Never suffer sleep to close thy eyelids after thy going to bed, till thou hast thrice reviewed all thy actions of the day: Wherein have I done amiss? What have I done? What have I omitted that I ought to have done? If in this examination thou find that thou hast done amiss, reprimand thyself severely for it; and if thou hast done any good, rejoice.

Pythagoras requires us to make this examination daily, that by frequent and assiduous recollection our memory may be the more certain and the more infallible. And he will have us do it every evening before we go to sleep, to the end that each night, after all the actions of the day, we may give ourselves an exact account of them before the tribunal of conscience.

This severe examination of our dispositions may be sung as a hymn of praise to God at our going to bed: *Wherein have I done amiss? What have I done? What have I omitted that I ought to have done?* By this means the whole tenor of our life will be ordered according to the precepts that have been prescribed, and we shall conform our Reason that judges to the Divine Intelligence that made the Law.

What says the Legislator? That we ought to revere the superior Beings according to the order and rank of their Essence; have much veneration and respect for our parents and relations; love and embrace good men; keep in subjection our passions and worldly desires; respect ourselves everywhere and in all things; practise Justice; consider the shortness of life and the instability of riches; receive with submission the lot which the Divine Judgement sends us; take delight only in the thoughts that are worthy of God; keep our mind continually bent on what is most excellent; love and embrace only the reasons that truly deserve that name; put ourselves in a condition that we may preserve the precious storehouse of virtue; consult before we act, that repentance may not be the fruit of all we do; free ourselves from all opinion and obstinacy; seek after the life of knowledge and apply and adapt our body and all exterior things to the function of virtue. pp 65-66

The Poet exhorts us to make an examination into all the actions of the day, from the first to the last in order, without forgetting the intermediate actions, which is expressed in these words: *Continue to go on in this manner.* For it often happens that the transposition deceives the judgement and makes it favour some actions which, had the memory recollected in order, would have been inexcusable. Moreover, this recapitulation of the life we have led in the day refreshes in us the remembrance of all our past actions and awakens us to the thoughts of immortality. pp 66-67

45 - 48. Practise thoroughly all these things; meditate on them well; thou oughtest to love them with all thy heart. It is they that will put thee in the way of Divine Virtue. I swear it by Him who has transmitted into our souls the Sacred Tetraktys, the Source of Nature, whose course is eternal.

It is easier to conform human life to the rules of Reason than it is to incline it to what is most divine and most high. This cannot be done but by giving ourselves wholly up to contemplation. p 67

This beginning promises to him who has laid aside the sensual life, who has delivered himself as much as possible from the excess of passions, and who thereby has become man from man that he is, he shall commence to be God as much as it is possible for human nature to participate of the Divine Essence. p 68

Our soul, being a Reasonable Substance, has necessarily three faculties: the first is that by which we learn, and is the faculty which is commanded to *meditate*; the second is that whereby we retain what we learn and put it in practice, and is the faculty which is required to *practise and to exercise*; and the third is that by which we love what we have learnt and what we practise, and is the faculty which is exhorted to *love* all these things. p 68

48 - 49. Never set thy hand to the work, till thou hast first prayed the Gods to accomplish what thou art going to begin.

49 - 51. When thou hast made this habit familiar to thee, thou wilt know the constitution of the Immortal Gods and of men; even how far the different Beings extend, and what contains and binds them together.

52 - 53. Thou shalt likewise know, in accord with Cosmic Order, that the nature of this Universe is in all things alike, so that thou shalt not hope what thou oughtest not to hope; and nothing in this world shall be hid from thee.

As he is inferior to these Beings inasmuch as he is not always engaged in meditation on them, but is sometimes in a total ignorance and forgetfulness of his own Essence and of the Light that descends from God upon him, so likewise when he recovers this forgotten knowledge, he is superior to all the animals without Reason and to plants. And he surpasses, by his Essence, all terrestrial and mortal Nature because he is himself naturally able to return to his God, to efface his forgetfulness by reminiscence, to recover by instruction what he has lost, and to repair his flight from the things above by a contrary tendency, that is to say, by being wholly intent upon them.

p 75

54 - 60. Thou wilt likewise know that men draw upon themselves their own misfortune, voluntarily and of their own free choice. Wretches that they are! They neither see nor understand that their good is near them. There are very few of them who know how to deliver themselves out of their misfortunes. Such is the Fate that blinds mankind and takes away his senses. Like huge cylinders, they roll to and fro, always oppressed by ills without number; for fatal contention, which is innate in them, pursues them everywhere, tosses them up and down, nor do they perceive it. Instead of provoking and stirring it up, they ought by yielding to avert it.

Concerning the return of the soul to the place from which she descended, Plato says: "The man, who by his Reason, has overcome the tumult and wild disorder that are occasioned in him by the mixture of earth, water, air and fire, retakes this primitive form, and recovers his original habitude, because he returns sound and whole to the Star that had been assigned to him." He returns 'sound' because he is freed from the passions which are as so many diseases, and this cure cannot be performed in him except by the means of Practical Virtues. He returns 'whole' because he recovers understanding and knowledge as his essential attributes, which cannot happen to him but by the means of the Contemplative Virtues.

p 77

The Essence of man, holding the middle place between the Beings that always contemplate God and those that are incapable of contemplating Him, may raise itself up towards the one, or debase and sink itself down towards the other, having by reason of its amphibious nature an equal propensity to take the Divine or brutal

resemblance accordingly as it receives or rejects the understanding of the Good Spirit.
p 78

The greatest part of men are wicked slaves to their passion, and in a manner run mad through the violence of their propensity to the things of this world. This evil they bring upon themselves by having willfully departed from God and deprived themselves of His Presence and, if I may dare to say so, of the familiarity with Him which they had the happiness to enjoy while they inhabited the Mansions of pure and unclouded Light. Now the *Fate that blinds mankind and takes away his senses* is a mark of their departure from God.
p 79

61 - 66. Great Jupiter, Father of men, you would deliver them all from the evils that oppress them, if you would show them what is the Daimon of whom they make use. But take courage, the race of men is divine. Sacred Nature reveals to them the most hidden Mysteries. If she impart to thee her secrets, thou wilt easily perform all the things which I have ordained thee, and healing thy soul, thou wilt deliver it from all these evils, from all these afflictions.

It was the custom of the Pythagoreans to call God, the Father and Creator of the Universe, by the name of *Jupiter*, which in the original tongue is taken from a word that signifies 'Life,' for He who gave Life and Being to all things ought to be called by a name derived from His power. And the truly proper name for God is that which most evidently denotes His works.

When these Verses pray that we may be delivered from all our evils, they ask, as a thing absolutely necessary, that we may know our own Essence. For this is what is meant by this expression *what is the Daimon of whom they make use*, that is to say, *what is their soul*. For from this return to ourselves, from this knowledge of ourselves, will necessarily result the deliverance from our evils and the manifestation of the goods that God offers us, to make us happy.
p 81

67 - 69. Abstain thou from all that we have forbidden in the Purifications; and in the Deliverance of the Soul make a just distinction of them; examine all things well, leaving thyself always to be guided and directed by the understanding that comes from above, and that ought to hold the reins.

For the perfection, therefore, of the soul we have need of truth and virtue. And for the purgation of our luminous body we stand in need to be cleansed of all the pollutions of matter, to have recourse to holy Purifications, and to make use of all the strength that God has given us to stir us to fly from these inferior abodes.
p 83

These Verses, therefore, teach all who wish to understand the *Symbols* of Pythagoras that by the exercise of virtue, and by embracing truth and purity, we ought to take care of our soul and our luminous body, which the Oracles call the *subtle chariot of the soul*. Now the purity here spoken of extends to food and drink and to the whole management and usage of our mortal body, in which is lodged our luminous body

which inspires life into the inanimate body and contains and preserves all its harmony.
p 83

The end of the Pythagorean Philosophy is that we may become all over wings to soar aloft to the Divine Good, to the end that at the hour of death, leaving upon earth this mortal body and divesting us of its corruptible nature, we may be ready for the celestial voyage, like champions in the sacred combats of Philosophy. For then we shall return to our ancient country and be deified as far as it is possible for men to become *Gods*. And this we are promised in the two following Verses. p 87

70 - 71. And when, after having divested thyself of thy mortal body, thou arrivest in the most pure Aether, thou shalt be a God, immortal, incorruptible, and death shall have no more dominion over thee.

The perfection of virtue is to keep ourselves within the limits of the Creation, by which all things are distinguished according to their kind, and to submit ourselves to the Laws of Providence that have distributed to each individual the good that is proper for it in regard to its faculties and its virtues. p 89



We thought it proper to proportion this work, as much as we could, to the sense of these Verses, reciting no more of the general precepts of Pythagoras than what was consonant and might serve to the explanation of these *Golden Verses*, which are properly only a most perfect representation of his Philosophy, an abridgement of his principal tenets and elements of perfection, which they who have walked in the ways of God and whose virtues have raised up to Heaven have left to instruct their descendants. p 90