

# **The Moral Precepts**

*Dionysius Cato.*

*Translated from the Classic Latin by Antonio Palomo-  
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*This edition*

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[EPISTULA]

[Marci Catonis ad filium salutem]

**[Cum animaduenterem, quam plurimos grauitur in uia morum errare, succurrendum opinioni eorum et consulendum famae existimaui, maxime ut gloriose uiuerent et honorem contingerent. nunc te, fili karissime, docebo, quo pacto morem animi tui componas. igitur praecepta mea ita legito, ut intellegas. legere enim et non intellegere neclegere est.]**

[LETTER]

[Mark of Cato to son I would greet]

[Whilst I adverted how many to wander heavily in the road of habits,

To succor to the opinion of them and to counsel to the rumour I considered, broadly and

Gloriously they lived and the honor they seized. Now you, oh dearest son, I shall teach, with which

Covenant the habit of your mind you arranged. Thus my precepts thus you shall gather, as you comprehended.

Indeed to gather and not to comprehend is to neglect.]

## **MONOSTICHS**

### **Deo Suplica**

Beg to God

### **Parentes Ama**

Love the parents

### **Cognatos Cole**

Honor the relatives

### **Datum Serua**

Take-care of the given

### **Foro Parce**

Avoid the public life

### **Cum Bonis Ambula**

Walk with the decent

### **Antequam Uoceris, Ne Accesseris**

Before than you were called, you shall not draw-near

### **Mundus Esto**

Be clean

### **Saluta Libenter**

Wish-well freely

### **Maiori Concede**

Comply with the forefathers

### **Magistratum Metue**

Be afraid of the magistrate

### **Verecundiam Serua**

Preserve the shame

### **Rem Tuam Custodi**

Guard your concern

**Diligentiam Adhibe**

Employ the perseverance

**Familiam Cura**

Attend to the household

**Mutuum Da**

Give reciprocally

**Cui Des, Uideto**

To whom you give, you shall beware

**Conuiuare Raro**

Be rarely drunk

**Quod Satis Est, Dormi**

As far as you are sated, sleep.

**Coniugem ama**

Love the conjoin

**Iusiurandum Serua**

Keep the oath

**Uino Tempera**

Be moderate with the wine

**Pugna Pro Patria**

Fight for your country

**Nihil Temere Credideris**

Lend nothing inconsiderately

**Meretricem Fuge**

Get away from the prostitute

**Libros Lege**

Read books

**Quae Legeris, Memento**

That which you read, remember

**Liberos Erudi**

Teach the children

**Blandus Esto**

Be pleasant

**Irascere Ob Rem Grauem**

Be irascible for the grave affairs

**Neminem Riseris**

You shall laugh at nobody

**In Iudicio Adesto**

You shall be present in court

**Ad Praetorium Stato**

Stand by the “General’s house”

**Consultus Esto**

Be deliberate

**Virtute Utere**

Make use of virtue

**Trocho Lude**

Play with the hoop

**Aleam Fuge**

Stay away from the gambler

**Litteras Disce**

Learn to read

**Bono Benefacito**

Do service to the good

**Tute Consule**

Advise safely

**Maledicus Ne Esto**

Be not scurrilous

**Existimationem Retine**

Reserve the opinion

**Aequum Iudica**

Judge equally

**Nihil Mentire**

Lie of nothing

**Iracundiam Rege**

Rule the irascibility

**Parentem Patientia Uince**

Overcome the parent with patience

**Minorem Ne Contempseris**

You shall disdain not the inferior one

**Nihil Arbitrio Uirium Feceris**

You shall do nothing of the virtues with caprice

**Patere Legem, Quam Ipse Teleris**

To open to the precept, which you yourself are stuck to

**Benefici Accepti Esto Memor**

Be mindful of the accepted favour

**Pauce In Conuiuio Loquere**

Be little talkative in a banquet

**Miserum Noli Inridere**

Do not wish to laugh at the wretched

**Alienum Noli Concupiscere**

Do not wish to covet another's

**Illud Adgredere, Quod Iustum Est**

Be undertaken by that which is just

**Libenter Amorem Ferto**

Propose love willingly

**Liberalibus Stude**

Desire freedom

## **DISTICHS**

### **LIBER I (BOOK I):**

**Si Deus Est Animus, Nobis Ut Carmina Dicunt,  
Hic Tibi Praecipue Sit Pura Mente Colendus.**

If God is Intellect, as poems tell to us,  
That one be to yourself especially tilled with a pure mind.

**Plus Uigila Semper Neu Somno Deditus Esto;  
Nam Diuturna Quies Uitiis Alimenta Ministrat.**

More awake always be, not surrendered to sleep;  
For long rest manages the nourishments with vices.

**Uirtutem Primam Esse Puto, Compescere Linguam:  
Proximus Ille Deo Est, Qui Scit Ratione Tacere.**

Ponder to be the primary virtue, to restrain the tongue:  
That one is next to God, who knows to be silent with a reason.

**Sperne Repugnando Tibi Tu Contrarius Esse:  
Conueniet Nulli, Qui Secum Dissidet Ipse.**

In order to fight you yourself disdain to be contradictory:  
He will agree with no one, who will disagree with him himself.

**Si Uitam Inspicias Hominum, Si Denique Mores,  
Cum Culpant Alios: Nemo Sine Crimine Uiuat.**

If you looked into the life of men, if for instance the habits,  
When they blame others: nobody lives without a flaw. .

**Quae Nocitura Tenes, Quamuis Sint Cara, Relinque:**

**Utilitas Opibus Praeponi Tempore Debet.**

That which will hurt you grasp, although they be estimated; abandon:

The advantage to be placed before the riches owes in time.

**Clemens Et Constans, Ut Res Expostulate Esto:**

**Temporibus Mores Sapiens Sine Crimine Mutat.**

Be clement and constant, as you demand something:

Without blemish the sage changes the habits with the times.

**Nil Temere Uxori De seruis Crede Querenti:**

**Semper Enim Mulier Quem Coniux Diligit Odit.**

Believe nothing indiscreetly of a wife by complaining about the servants:

Always, indeed, a woman hated to whom the consort esteems.

**Cum Moneas Aliquem Nec Se Uelit Ille Moneri, Si Tibi Sit Carus,**

**Noli Desistere Coeptis.**

Whereas you advised someone that wished himself not to be advised, If to you he be dear, be-unwilling to desist to the attempts.

**Contra Uerbosos Noli Contendere Uerbis:**

**Sermo Datur Cunctis, Animi Sapientia Paucis.**

Against talkers be-unwilling to argue with words:

Conversation is given to all, wisdom of the soul to few.

**Dilige Sic Alios, Ut Sis Tibi Carus Amicus;**

**Sic Bonus Esto Bonis, Ne Te Mala Damna Sequantur.**

Esteem, thus, others, as if you be to yourself a dear friend;

Be good with the good ones so not bad damages be followed by you.

**Rumores Fuge, Neu Incipias (studeas) Nouus Auctor Haberi;**

**Nam Nulli Tacuisse Nocet, Nocet Esse Locutum.**

Escape from rumours and you would not begin to be held the recent author;

For he harms to nobody being silent, he harms were he about to talk.

**Spem Tibi Polliciti Certam Promittere Noli:**

**Rara Fides Ideo Est, Quia Multi Multa Locuntur.**

Having been offered hope to you, do not take-it as certain:

Assurance is therefore rare, because many say much.

**Cum Te Aliquis Laudat, Iudex Tuus Esse Memento;**

**Plus Aliis De Te, Quam Tu Tibi, Credere Noli.**

When somebody praises you, remember to be your own judge;

Besides about you by the other, as you to yourself, do not believe.

**Officium Alterius Multis Narrare Memento;**

**At Quaecumque Aliis Benefeceris Ipse, Sileto.**

The favour of other remember to tell to many;

And whatsoever yourself had benefited to others, be silent.

**Multorum Cum Facta Senex Et Dicta Reprendis,**

**Fac Tibi Succurrant, Iuuenis Quae Feceris Ipse.**

Of many deeds and remarks when old you criticize,

Note they occurred to you yourself, which younger you yourself had done.

**Ne Cures, Si Quis Tacito Sermone Loquatur;**

**Consciis Ipse Sibi De Se Putat Omnia Dicit.**

Care not, if anyone did secretly talk in a conversation;

Conscious to himself alone, about himself he thinks everything is said.

**Cum Fueris Felix, Quae Sunt Aduersa, Caueto:**

**Non Eodem Cursu Respondent Ultima Primis.**

Whereas you be merry, those which are adversities, beware of:

Not by same curse the last ones correspond to the first ones.

**Cum Dubia Et Fragilis Nobis Sit Uita Tributa,**

**In Morte Alterius Spem Tu Tibi Ponere Noli.**

Whereas fluctuating and fragile were by our conferred life,

In the death of the other do not put to you yourself the hope.

**Exiguum Munus Cum Dat Tibi Pauper Amicus,  
Accipito Laetus, Plene Et Laudare Memento.**

When a poor friend gives a little gift to you,  
Glad you shall receive, remember to praise and completely.

**Infantem Nudum Cum Te Natura Crearit,  
Paupertatis Onus Patienter Ferre Memento.**

As nature had created you a naked infant,  
Remember to endure patiently the burden of poverty.

**Ne Timeas Illam, Quae Vitae Est Ultima Finis:  
Qui Mortem Metuit, Quod Vivit, Perdit Id Ipsum.**

Fear not that, which is the farther limit of life:  
Who is afraid of death, insofar as he is alive, he wrecks himself.

**Si Tibi Pro Meritis Nemo Succurrit Amicus,  
Incusare Deos Noli, Sed Te Ipse Coerce.**

If to you yourself according to having been deserved nobody helps friendly,  
Do not blame the gods, yet check you yourself.

**Ne Tibi Quid Desit, Quod Quaesistis, Utere Parce;  
Utque, Quod Est, Serues, Semper Tibi Deesse Putato.**

So it would not lack to yourself, that which you requested, spare to use;  
While, what there is, you'd preserve, always to yourself having been imagined to be-absent.

**Quod Dare non Possis, Uerbis Promittere Noli,  
Ne Sis Uentosus, Dum Uir Bonus Esse Uideris.**

What to give you could not, do not promise with words,  
You would not be conceited, as long a good man you had looked to be.

**Qui Simulat Uerbis Nec Corde Est Fidus Amicus,  
Tu Quoque Fac Simules: Sic Ars Deluditur Arte.**

Who simulates with words is not at heart a faithful friend,  
Grant you would simulate too: thus the art is deluded by the art.

**Noli Homines Blando Nimium Sermone Probare:  
Fistula Dulce Canit, Uolucrum Dum Decipit Auceps.**

Approve not much, men with flattering talk:  
The flute sounds sweet, as long as the fowler deceives the bird.

**Cum Tibi Sint Nati Nec Opes, Tunc Artibus Illos Instrue,  
Quo Possint Inopem Defenders Uitam.**

Whereas to you they were born without wealth, then with skills instruct them,  
By which you defended the life they could without wealth.

**Quod Uile Est, Carum, Quod Carum, Uile Putato:  
Sic Tu Nec Cupidus Nec Auarus Nosceris Ulli.**

What is cheap, expensive, what expensive, imagine cheap:  
Thus you will become acquainted neither with the ambitious nor with any avaricious.

**Quae Culpare Soles, Ea Tu Ne Feceris Ipse:  
Turpe Est Doctori, Cum Culpa Redarguat Ipsum.**

What you use to blame, these ones, you shall not do it:  
Ugly is for the teacher, whilst guilt disproved itself.

**Quod Iustum Est Petito Uel Quod Uideatur Honestum;  
Nam Stultum Petere Est Quod Possit Iure Negari.**

What is just you shall seek, perhaps it were seen as honorable;  
For silly is to seek that which rightfully could be to be denied.

**Ignotum Notis Noli Praeponere Amicis:  
Cognita Iudicio Constant, Incognita Casu.**

The ignorant to the known friends prefer not:  
With judgment the acknowledged ones stand-by, the unknown ones by chance.

**Cum Dubia In Certis Uersetur Uita Periclis,  
Pro Lucro Tibi Pone Diem Quicumque Sequetur.**

Whereas the fluctuating life were engaged in fixed dangers,  
To your own advantage spend whatever day is followed.

**Uincere Cum Possis, Interdum Cede Sodali,  
Obsequio Quoniam Dulces Retinentur Amici.**

Whereas you could triumph, occasionally yield to a colleague,  
Now then, the sweet friends are kept with indulgence.

**Ne dubita, Cum Magna Petes, Impendere Parua:  
His Etenim Rebus Coniungit Gratia Caros.**

When you seek the magnificent, doubt not to devote to the trifle:  
In these indeed things the gratitude joins the expensive.

**Litem Inferre Caue, Cum Quo Tibi Gratia Iuncta Est:  
Ira Odium Generate, Corcordia Nutrit Amorem.**

Beware to cause a quarrel, since the gratitude is connected with you yourself:  
Ire generates hatred, concord nourishes love.

**Servorum Culpa Cum Te Dolor Urguet In Iram,  
Ipse Tibi Moderare, Tuis Ut Parcere Possis.**

The fault of the servants with you in anger triggered the pain,  
Moderate yourself while you could be-lenient with those.

**Quem Superare potes, Interdum Uince Ferendo;  
Maxima Enim Est hominum Semper Patientia Uirtus.**

That which you can surmount, in the meanwhile overcome bearing;  
Indeed, the biggest patience of men is always a virtue.

**Conserua Potius, Quae Sunt Iam Parta, Labore:  
Cum Labor In Damno Est, Crescit Mortalis Egestas.**

Rather preserve, those which were already acquired, work:

When labor is in fault, it springs up the need of the mortal.

**Dapsilis Interdum Notis Et Largus Amicis Cum Fueris,  
Semper Tibi Proximus Esto.**

Sumptuous sometimes with the known friends and generous, you shall be;  
Always be the nearest to yourself.

## Liber II

**[Telluris si forte uelis cognoscere cultus,  
Uergilium legito; quodsi mage nosse laboras  
Herbarum uires, Macer haec tibi carmina dicit;  
Si Romana cupis et Punica noscere bella,  
Lucanum quaeres, qui Martis praelia dixit;  
Si quid amare libet uel discere amare legendo,  
Nasonem petito; sin autem cura tibi haec est,  
Ut sapiens uiuas, audi quae discere possis,  
Per quae semotum uitii deducitur aeuum:  
Ergo ades et quae sit sapientia disce legendo.]**

[If by chance you wished to know of the earth the care,  
Read Virgil; but if you strive to have known more  
The virtues of herbs, Macer says to you that poem;  
If to know about the Punic and Roman wars you wish,  
You shall require Lucan, who tells the battles of Mars;  
If it pleases to love or learn to love by reading,  
Strive for Naso; if, however, the concern to you, this is,  
In order that you lived wise, hear what you could learn,  
By which vices having been separated, it is drawn the lifetime:  
Thus, stand by and what be wisdom you learn by reading.]

**Si potes, ignotis etiam prodesse memento:  
Utilius regno est, meritis adquirere amicos.**

If you can, remember to be-useful, however, with the ignorant ones:  
It is fitter for the kingdom, to acquire friends by merits.

**An di sint caelumque regant, ne quaere doceri:  
Cum sis mortalis, quae sunt mortalia, cura.**

Whether the gods controlled and were in the sky, seek not to be taught:  
Whereas you were mortal, care for those which are mortal.

**Linque metum leti; nam stultum est tempore in omni,  
Dum mortem metuas, amittere gaudia uitae.**

Quit the fear of death; for the stupid is in it all the time,  
As long as you feared death, the joys of life you shall send away.

**Iratu de re incerta contendere noli:  
Inpedit ira animum, ne possis cernere uerum.**

Do not wish to demand from the doubtful affair having been enraged:  
The ire impedes the intellect; you could not see the truth.

**Fac sumptum propere, cum res desiderat ipsa;  
Dandum etenim est aliquid, dum tempus postulat aut res.**

Mind the expense without hesitation, when the affair demands her;  
Thus, something is given when the time or affair requires it.

**Quod nimium est fugito, paruo gaudere memento:  
Tuta mage est puppis, modico quae flumine fertur.**

By having been gone what is excessive, remember to rejoice in the small:  
The stern that is carried is rather protected in a moderate flood.

**Quod pudeat, socios prudens celare memento,  
Ne plures culpent id quod tibi displicet uni.**

When ashamed, discreet remember to hide from the fellows,  
Many would not blame it, to one displeases that which to you.

**Nolo putes prauos homines peccata lucrari:  
Tempore si peccata latent, et tempore parent.**

I wish not you thought the perverse men the mistakes to be profited from:  
If in time the faults they hide, also in time they appear.

**Corporis exigui uires contemnere noli:  
Consilio pollet, cui uim natura negauit.**

Wish not to despise men of small body:  
With the judgment he is-strong, to whom Nature denied the strength.

**Cui scieris non esse parem, pro tempore cede:  
Uictorem a uicto superari saepe uidemus.**

To whom you had known to be not equal, yield for the moment:  
We see often to be overcome by the conquered the conqueror.

**Aduersum notum noli contendere uerbis:  
Lis uerbis minimis interdum maxima crescit.**

The known adversity wish not to contend with words:  
The quarrel with little words occasionally springs-up the highest.

**Quid deus intendat, noli perquirere sorte:  
Quid statuatur de te, sine te deliberat ille.**

What the deity intended, wish not to examine-carefully by prophecy:  
What out of you it arranged, without you that one deliberates.

**Inuidiam nimio cultu uitare memento:  
Quae si non laedit, tamen hanc sufferre molestum est.**

Remember to avoid envy with excessive care:  
That which if not harms, yet that is bothersome to suffer.

**Forti animo ferto, cum sis damnatus inique:  
Nemo diu gaudet, qui iudice uincit iniquo.**

Bear with a strong intellect, whereas you be discredited unfairly:  
Nobody rejoices all day, who overcomes with an unfair judgment.

**Litis praeteritae noli maledicta referre:  
Post inimicitias iram meminisse malorum est.**

Of the bygone quarrel wish not to renew the offenses:  
After the hostilities to have remembered the ire is of the evil-ones.

**Nec te conlaudes, nec te culpaueris ipse;  
Hoc faciunt stulti, quos gloria uexat inanis.**

Do not congratulate yourself, nor to you had yourself blamed;  
The former, the stupid ones do, to whom the worthless glory rides.

**Utere quaesitis modice: cum sumptus abundat,  
Labitur exiguo, quod partum est tempore longo.**

You seek to use with moderation: when the sumptuous is-abundant,  
With the scanty slips-away that which is produced with long time.

**Insipiens esto, cum tempus postulat ipsum:  
Stultitiam simulare ioco, cum tempore laus est.**

Be foolish when time demands it:  
With time it is-laudable to pretend stupidity with a joke.

**Luxuriam fugito, simul et uitare memento  
Crimen auaritia; nam sunt contraria fama.**

Flee from luxuriance, and likewise remember to shun  
The flaw of the avarice; for they are contrary to notoriety.

**Nolito quaedam referenti credere saepe:  
Exigua est tribuenda fides, qui multa locuntur.**

You will not wish to believe someone by often retorting:  
The scanty reliance ought to be bestowed to whom talks much.

**Quae potus peccas, ignoscere tu tibi noli;  
Nam crimen uini nullum est, sed culpa bibentis.**

When having been drunk you erred, wish not to ignore to you yourself;  
For, the mistake of the wine is nothing, but the guilt of drinking.

**Consilium arcanum tacito committe sodali,  
Corporis auxilium medico committe fideli.**

The secret advice with silence, hand-over to a companion,  
The remedy of the body by the sincere physician: hand-over.

**Successus nolito indigni ferre moleste:  
Indulget Fortuna malis, ut uincere possit.**

You will not wish to endure the shameful outcomes with annoyance:  
Fortune enjoys with the bad-ones, as long as she was able to win.

**Prospice, qui ueniant casus, hos esse ferendos:  
Nam leuius laedit, quidquid praeuidimus ante.**

Foresee, who would fall into the accidents, these must be endured:  
For, the slighter-one harms, before we anticipate whatsoever.

**Rebus in aduersis animum submittere noli:  
Spem retine; spes una hominem nec morte relinquit.**

In adverse affairs wish not to drop the understanding:  
Maintain hope; hope abandons not man together with death.

**Rem, tibi quam noris aptam, dimittere noli:  
Fronte capillata, post est Occasio calua.**

The affair, to you that you shall know suitable, wish not to dismiss:  
In the haired forehead, later the opportunity is in baldness.

**Quod sequitur spectata quodque imminet ante uideto:  
Illum imitare deum, partem qui spectat utramque.**

What is followed, expect, whatever approaches beforehand watch-out:  
That god be imitated, who observes each part.

**Fortius ut ualeas, interdum parcior esto:  
Pauca uoluptati debentur, plura saluti.**

Stronger as you were-capable, occasionally be more moderate:  
A few shall be obliged to pleasure; many to welfare.

**Iudicium populi numquam contempseris unus:  
Ne nulli placeas, dum uis contempnere multos.**

The judgment of the people one shall never despise:  
You did not please anybody, as yet many despise the attack.

**Sit tibi praecipue, quod primum est, cura salutis;  
Tempora nec culpes, cum sit tibi causa doloris.**

Especially, be it to you, that which is fundamental, the care of the health;  
You blame not the times, whereas the cause of the pain were yourself.

**Somnia ne cures; nam mens humana quod optat,  
Dum uigilat, uerum per somnum cernit id ipsum.**

You would not care for the dreams; for the human mind to that chooses,  
As yet she is-awake, separates the reality itself by means of a dream.

### **Liber III**

**[Hoc quicumque uolet carmen cognoscere lector,  
Cum praecepta ferat quae sunt gratissima uitae,  
Commoda multa feret; sin autem spreuerit illud,  
Non me scriptorem, sed se fastidiet ipse.]**

[This poem whoever lector wished to know;  
Whereas the precepts it proposed which are the dearest of life,  
It shall propose many advantageous; if however that had spurned,  
Not to me the writer, but to him himself he shall disdain.]

**Instrue praeceptis animum, ne discere cessa;  
Nam sine doctrina uita est quasi mortis imago.**

With precepts instruct the intellect, cease not to learn;  
Because without instruction, life is nearly the image of death.

**Cum recte uiuas, ne cures uerba malorum:**

**Arbitrii non est nostri, quid quisque loquatur.**

Whilst you lived rightly, you would care not for the words of the insulting-ones:  
Of our control is not what everyone talks.

**Productus testis, saluo tamen ante pudore,  
Quantumcumque potes, celato crimen amici.**

Having been produced as a witness, except nevertheless before shame,  
As much as you can, you shall conceal the fault of a friend.

**Sermones blandos blaesosque cauere memento:  
Simplicitas ueri forma est, laus ficta loquentis.**

The flattering and mellow speeches remember to beware of:  
Simplicity is the shape of the truth, the commendation of the talker a fiction.

**Segnitiam fugito, quae uitae ignauia fertur;  
Nam cum animus languet, consumit inertia corpus.**

Flee from idleness, which by the inactivity of life is caused;  
Since when the intellect weakens, the body consumes with sluggishness.

**Interpone tuis interdum gaudia curis,  
Ut possis animo quemuis sufferre laborem.**

Interpose to your cares occasionally the joys,  
Since you could with the intellect suffer any travail.

**Alterius dictum aut factum ne carpseris umquam,  
Exemplo simili ne te derideat alter.**

The said of other or the done you shall not grab ever,  
With a similar precedent not you one derided.

**Quod tibi sors dederit tabulis suprema notato  
Augendo serua, ne sis quem fama loquatur.**

What to you the supernal fate shall deliver you shall mark in a tablet  
Protect by honoring, be not that which fame says.

**Cum tibi diuitiae superant in fine senectae,  
Munificus facito uiuas, non parcus, amicis.**

When to you riches surmount in the end of senility,  
Alive you shall be munificent, not stingy, with friends.

**Utile consilium dominus ne despice serui:  
Si prodest, sensum nullius tempseris umquam.**

Master! the useful advice despise not of the servant:  
If it is-useful, the understanding of nobody you shall belittle ever.

**Rebus et in censu si non est quod fuit ante,  
Fac uiuas contentus eo quod tempora praebent.**

With the affairs and in the census if it is not what was before,  
Act while you lived contented with it which the times offer.

**Uxorem fuge ne ducas sub nomine dotis,  
Nec retinere uelis, si coeperit esse molesta.**

Flee from the wife, you wouldn't hold under the name of the dowry,  
Nor retain with sails, if she had commenced to be annoying.

**Multorum disce exemplo, quae facta sequaris,  
Quae fugias: uita est nobis aliena magistra.**

Of many learn by example, which deeds you would follow,  
Which ones you fled from: life is to us another's teaching.

**Quod potes, id temptato, operis ne pondere pressus  
Subcumbat labor et frustra inceptata relinquo.**

What you can, it you will test, having been loaded with works not with a burden  
The labor succumbed and begun in vain you relinquished.

**Quod factum scis non recte, nolito silere,  
Ne uideare malos uelle inritare tacendo.**

Insofar as a not right deed you know, you shall wish not to be silent,  
Nor to see the evil-ones to wish to be provoked by being-silent.

**Iudicis auxilium sub iniqua lite rogato:  
Ipsae etiam leges cupiunt ut iure rogentur.**

You shall ask for the help of a judge under a pernicious quarrel:  
Besides, the laws themselves wish while by justice they were requested.

**Quod merito pateris, patienter ferre memento,  
Cumque reus tibi sis, ipsum te iudice damna.**

What you are undergone deservedly, remember to endure patiently,  
Whatever party you were to yourself, condemn with judgment you yourself.

**Multa legas facito, tum lectis neglege multa;  
Nam miranda canunt, sed non credenda poetae.**

You shall grant you read much, afterwards neglect much from having been read;  
For to marvel they sing, but not to believe to the poets.

**Inter conuiuas fac sis sermone modestus,  
Ne dicare loquax, cum uis urbanus haberi.**

Amongst guests, grant you be temperate in speech,  
Be not devoted talkative, whilst the civic strength be hold.

**Coniugis iratae noli tu uerba timere;  
Nam lacrimis struit insidias, cum femina plorat.**

Wish not to fear, you, the words of the angered spouse;  
For with tears she arranges the snares.

**Utere quaesitis, sed ne uidearis abuti:  
Qui sua consumunt, cum dest, aliena secuntur.**

By having been sought to use, but you would not be seen to abuse:  
Who consumes his own, when there is, the other's are chased.

**Fac tibi proponas, mortem non esse timendam:  
Quae bona si non est, finis tamen illa malorum est.**

Assert to you you would lay-out: dead must not be feared:  
As good if it is not, the end however by that is of the evil-ones.

**Uxoris linguam, si frugi est, ferre memento;  
Namque malum est, non uelle pati nec posse tacere.**

The tongue of the spouse, if she is honest, remember to bear;  
But if it is evil, be willing neither to be endured nor to be able to be silent.

**Aequa diligito caros pietate parentes,  
Nec matrem offendas, dum uis bonus esse parenti.**

You shall esteem the dear parents with equal devotion,  
Neither would you offend the mother, if you wish to be good with the parents.

## **Liber IV**

**[Semotam a curis si uis producers uitam  
Nec uitii haerere animi, quae moribus obsunt,  
Haec praecepta tibi saepe esse legenda memento.  
Inuenies, quo te possis mutare, magistrum.]**

[The private life out of worries if you wished producing  
Be clung not to the vices of the intellect, which to the manners are opposed,  
These precepts to you remember to have to be read often.  
You shall discover, wherefore you would be able to change to you, the master.]

**Despice diuitias, si uis animo esse beatus;  
Quas qui suspiciunt, mendicant semper auari.**

Despise possessions, if you wished to be happy in the mind;  
Those who somehow mistrust, always beg to the greedy.

**Commoda naturae nullo tibi tempore derunt,  
Si contentus eo fueris quod postulat usus.**

The conveniences of Nature in no time to you lamented,  
If contented with it you were as the occasion requires.

**Cum sis incautus nec rem ratione gubernes,  
Noli Fortunam, quae non est, dicere caecam.**

Whereas you be incautious you would not govern an affair with the reason,  
Wish not the Fortune, which is not, to call blind.

**Dilige olens nardum, sed parce; defuge odorem,  
Quem nemo sanctus nec honestus captat habere.**

Value smelling the nard, yet with moderation; evade the odour,  
Which nobody venerable nor honest chases to hold.

**Cum fueris locuples, corpus curare memento;  
Aeger diues habet nummos, se non habet ipsum.**

Whereas you were opulent, remember to take-care-of the body:  
The ill rich has coins, to him himself he has not.

**Uerbera cum tuleris discens aliquando magistri,  
Fer patris imperium, cum uerbis exit in iram.**

The blows while you had endured learning sometimes from the master,  
Bear the authority of the father, when in anger he exceeds with words.

**Res age quae prosunt; rursus uitare memento,  
In quibus error inest, nec spes est certa laboris.**

Practice things which are-useful; in turn remember to avoid,  
In whom error exists, no hope is sure of the effort.

**Quod donare potes, gratis concede roganti;  
Nam recte fecisse bonis, in parte lucrorum est.**

What you could donate, concede gratis by inviting;  
For, rightly to have favored to the pleasant-ones, it is partially of the opportunists.

**Quod tibi suspectum est, confestim discute quid sit;  
Namque solent, primo quae sunt neglecta, nocere.**

What is suspicious to you, immediately dispel what be;  
For they use to, firstly those which are disregarded, harm.

**Cum te detineat Ueneris damnosa libido,  
Indulgere gulae noli, quae uentris amica est.**

Whilst the destructive desire of Venus detained you,  
Wish not to give-way to gluttony, which is the girlfriend of the belly.

**Cum tibi praeponas animalia bruta timore,  
Unum hominem scito tibi praecipue esse timendum.**

Although to yourself you proposed to fear the heavy animals,  
Inquire to you on one man particularly must to be feared.

**Cum tibi praeualidae fuerint in corpore uires,  
Fac sapias: sic tu poteris uir fortis haberi.**

Since for you very-strong the men were in body,  
Grant you knew: thus, you will be able to be considered a strong man.

**Auxilium a notis petito, si forte labores;  
Nec quisquam melior medicus quam fidus amicus.**

The assistance by signs you shall strive for, if firmly you labored;  
Not anybody better physician than a trusty friend.

**Cum sis ipse nocens, moritur cur uictima pro te?  
Stultitia est morte alterius sperare salutem.**

Whereas you be harmful yourself, why the victim is dead on behalf of you?  
Foolishness is in the death of the other to hope health.

**Cum tibi uel socium uel fidum quaeris amicum,  
Non tibi fortuna est hominis sed uita petenda.**

When the friend seeks for you or the companion or the trustworthy,  
Not for you the luck of man exists but by the demanding life.

**Utere quaesitis opibus, fuge nomen auari:  
Quid tibi diuitias, si semper pauper abundes?**

You shall use the resources you-all request, flee-from the name of "avaricious:"  
What riches to you, if always you abounded poor?

**Si famam seruare cupis, dum uiuis, honestam,  
Fac fugias animo, quae sunt mala gaudia uitae.**

If you desire to keep the honest fame, while you lived,  
Make-sure you abandoned with the mind, those which are the bad delights of life.

**Cum sapias animo, noli ridere senectam;  
Nam quicumque seni puerilis sensus inhaeret.**

Whereas you tasted with the mind, wish not to ridicule senility;  
For the childish sense is-inherent to whichever old-age.

**Disce aliquid; nam cum subito Fortuna recessit,  
Ars remanet uitamque hominis non deserit umquam.**

Learn anything; for although unexpectedly Fortune receded,  
The art remains and the life of a man undoes not ever.

**Prospicito tecum tacitus quid quisque loquatur:  
Sermo hominum mores et celat et indicat idem.**

You shall foresee quiet what anyone has talked with you:  
The conversation of men reveals and conceals equally the manners.

**Exerce studio quamuis perceperis artem:  
Ut cura ingenium, sic et manus adiuuat usum.**

Exercise in research regardless you grasped the art:  
As with care the wit, and so the usage of the hand helps.

**Multum uenturi ne cures tempora fati:  
Non metuit mortem qui scit contempnere uitam.**

Much of the about to come, you wouldn't heed to the times of fate:  
It does not fear death who knows to loathe life.

**Disce sed a doctis, indoctos ipse doceto:  
Propaganda etenim est rerum doctrina bonarum.**

Learn but from the instructed, he himself shall teach the uninstructed-ones:  
For the handed-down teaching is of good things.

**Hoc adhibe uitae quo possis uiuere sanus:  
Morbi causa mali est, nimia est quaecumque uoluptas.**

Apply this to life so you were able to live healthy:  
It is the cause of bad illness: intemperate is whatever pleasure.

**Laudaris quodcumque palam, quodcumque probaris,  
Hoc uide ne rursus leuitatis crimine damnes.**

Whoever you praised publicly, whoever you had approved,  
On the contrary see you condemned not with the fault of frivolity.

**Tranquillis rebus semper diuersa timeto,  
Rursus in aduersis melius sperare memento.**

In tranquil affairs always you shall fear the unsettled-ones,  
On the contrary in the adverse-ones remember to hope better.

**Discere ne cessa; cura sapientia crescit,  
Rara datur longo prudentia temporis usu.**

Cease not to learn; with care wisdom springs up,  
The unusual prudence is given with the long use of time.

**Parce laudato; nam quem tu saepe probaris,  
Una dies, qualis fuerit, ostendit, amicus.**

You shall laud moderately; for often that which you commended,  
One day, whichever it had been, the friend exposes.

**Non pudeat, quae nescieris, te uelle doceri:  
Scire aliquid laus est, culpa est nil discere uelle.**

He was not ashamed, whom you had not known, to wish to be taught by you:  
To know something is worthy, the blame is to wish to learn nothing.

**Cum Uenere et Baccho lis est et iuncta uoluptas:  
Quod lautum est, animo conplectere, sed fuge lites.**

When in Venus and in Bacchus the quarrel is and the associated pleasure:  
What is elegant, with the mind to embrace, yet flee from quarrels.

**Demissos animo et tacitos uitare memento:  
Quod flumen placidum est, forsan latet altius unda.**

Remember to evade with the understanding the quiet-ones and the humble-ones:  
Because the stream is placid, perhaps it hides the highest wave.

**Dum fortuna tibist rerum discrimine praua,  
Alterius spectata cui sit discrimine peior.**

As long as the fortune for you is of the things with distinction bad,  
Of other observe for whom it be with distinction worse.

**Quod potes, id tempta; nam litus carpere remis  
Utilius multo est quam uelum tendere in altum.**

What you can, test it; for to grasp the sea-shore with the oars  
Is much more serviceable than to spread-out the sail in the height.

**Contra hominem iustum praue contendere noli;  
Semper enim deus iniustas ulciscitur iras.**

Against a just man wish not to contend wrongly;  
Always indeed a god avenge the unjust rages.

**Ereptis opibus noli maerere dolendo,  
Sed gaude potius, tibi si contingat habere.**

By having been taken-away resources wish not to mourn by suffering,  
Yet rejoice capably, if it reached to have you.

**Est iactura grauis quaesitum amittere damno;  
Sed tibi cum ualeat corpus, superesse putato.**

The loss is of importance having been obtained to be released with damage;  
Yet whereas for you the body were-strong, think to survive.

**Tempora longa tibi noli promittere uitae:  
Quocumque incedis, sequitur mors corporis umbra.**

The long times of life for you wish not to guarantee:  
To wherever you stride, the death of the body is followed with the shadow.

**Ture deum placa, uitulum sine crescat aratro:  
Ne credas gaudere deum, cum caede litatur.**

Appease the god with incense, may the calf grow without a plow:  
Believe not to please the god, while it is immolated by a killing.

**Cede locum laesus Fortunaee, cede potenti:  
Laedere quo potuit, poterit prodesse aliquando.**

Having been wounded yield to Fortune the place, yield to the mighty:  
Whom *you were able to* harm, he will be-able to do-good someday.

**Cum quid peccaris, castiga te ipse subinde:  
Uulnera dum sanas, dolor est medicina doloris.**

Whereas to someone you had made-wrong, correct yourself immediately:  
Wound as long as you cure, pain is the medicine of pain.

**Damnaris numquam post longum tempus amicum:  
Mutavit mores, sed pignora prima memento.**

Never you condemned after a long time a friend:  
He changed the manners, but remember the first sureties.

**Gratior officiis, quo sis mage carior, esto,  
Ne nomen subeas quod dicunt officiperdi.**

Be more pleasing in tasks, as you be much nobler,  
May you not assume the name that they call “disagreeable.”

**Suspectus caue sis, ne sis miser omnibus horis;  
Nam timidis et suspectis aptissima mors est.**

Beware you be suspicious, may you not be unhappy in all hours;  
For to the fearful-ones and to the suspicious-ones death is most attached.

**Cum seruos fueris proprios mercatus in usus  
Et famulos dicas, homines tamen esse memento.**

While you were with the own servants in the use of the marketplace  
And you called “slaves,” yet remember to be men.

**Quam primum rapienda tibi est occasio prona,  
Ne rursus quaeras iam, quae neglexeris ante.**

When firstly by snatching for you is the opportunity favorable,  
May you not seek on the contrary, that which you had neglected before.

**Morte repentina noli gaudere malorum:  
Felices obeunt, quorum sine crimine uita est.**

With the sudden death of the evil-ones wish not to delight:  
The happy-ones pass-away, of whom without fault the life is.

**Cum coniux tibi sit, ne res et fama laboret,  
Uitandum ducas inimicum nomen amici.**

As there was a spouse for you, may she not labour the fame and the matter,  
May you assume to shun the inimical name of a friend.

**Cum tibi contigerit studio cognoscere multa,  
Fac discas, multa a uita te scire doceri.**

Whereas to yourself with study you had attained to know earnestly,  
Grant you learned, to know to be taught earnestly from your life.

**Miraris uersus nudis me scribere uerbis?  
Hoc breuitas fecit, sensu uno iungere binos.**

Had you marveled on the verses with the uncovered words by my writing?  
Brevity made this, with one sense to join the couplets.

*In some editions the following distichs are to be found too:*

**Laetandum est uita, nullius morte dolendum;  
Cur enim doleas, a quo dolor ipse recessit?**

Enjoyed must be life, suffering from no one in death;  
Why indeed would you suffer, from whom the pain itself departed?

**Quod scieris opus esse tibi, dimittere noli;  
Oblatum auxilium stultum est dimittere cuiquam.**

What you knew yourself the work to be, wish not to give-up;  
The offered help is stupid to dismiss from someone.

**Quod nocet, interdum, si prodest, ferre memento;  
Dulcis enim labor est, cum fructu ferre laborem.**

What hurts, occasionally, if it is-good, remember to endure;

It is indeed sweet the labor, with fruit to endure the work.

**Perde semel, socium quo ingratum noueris esse:  
Saepe dato bona, si scieris bene ponere, quod des.**

Lose at once, the partner in whom the ungrateful you knew to be:  
Protect by having been given the goods, if you knew well to value, what you give.

**Dissimula laesus, si non datur ultimo praesens:  
Qui celare potest odium, potest laedere, quem uult.**

Disguise having been hurt, if it is not given finally in person:  
Who is able to conceal the hatred, he is able to hurt anyone whom he wishes.

**Qui prodesse potest, non est fugiendus amicus,  
Si laesit uerbo: bonitas sine crimine nulla est.**

Who is able to benefit, he must be not avoided as friend,  
If he wounded with a word: goodness without guilt is nothing.

**Non pecces tunc, cum peccare impune licebit:  
Sub torture manet, quem damnat conscia uita.**

Do-amiss not now, whilst to do-amiss safely will be-precious:  
Under a tormentor persists, who damages with conscious life.

**Contra hominem astutum noli tu uerus haberi:  
Non captare malos stultum est nec uelle nocere.**

Against the cunning man wish not to be supported with the truth from you:  
Not to entice the evil-ones is stupid but to prefer to harm.

**Dat legem natura tibi, non accipit ipsa.**

Nature gives the law to you, she receives not herself.

**Quod tacitum esse uelis aliis tu dicere noli.**

Insofar as silent you wished to be to other one, wish not to talk yourself.

**Fortunae donis semper par esse memento:  
Non opibus bona uita datur, sed moribus ipsis.**

Remember to be equal always with the presents of Fortune:  
Not by influences the good life is given, but by manners themselves.

**Spem positam uoti noli tu semper habere;  
Non homini semper faciles deus annuit aures.**

The fixed hope of your vow wish not always to hold;  
God always assents to favorable ears not to man.

**Quod tibi consilium dederit probatus amicus,  
Conserva: nullum est damnum reparata uoluntas.**

Insofar as to you the advice gave the esteemed friend,  
Keep: nothing is damaged with a restored will.

**Sunt quaedam, quae ferre decet patienter amicum.**

Certain are, which I befit to endure patiently as a friend.