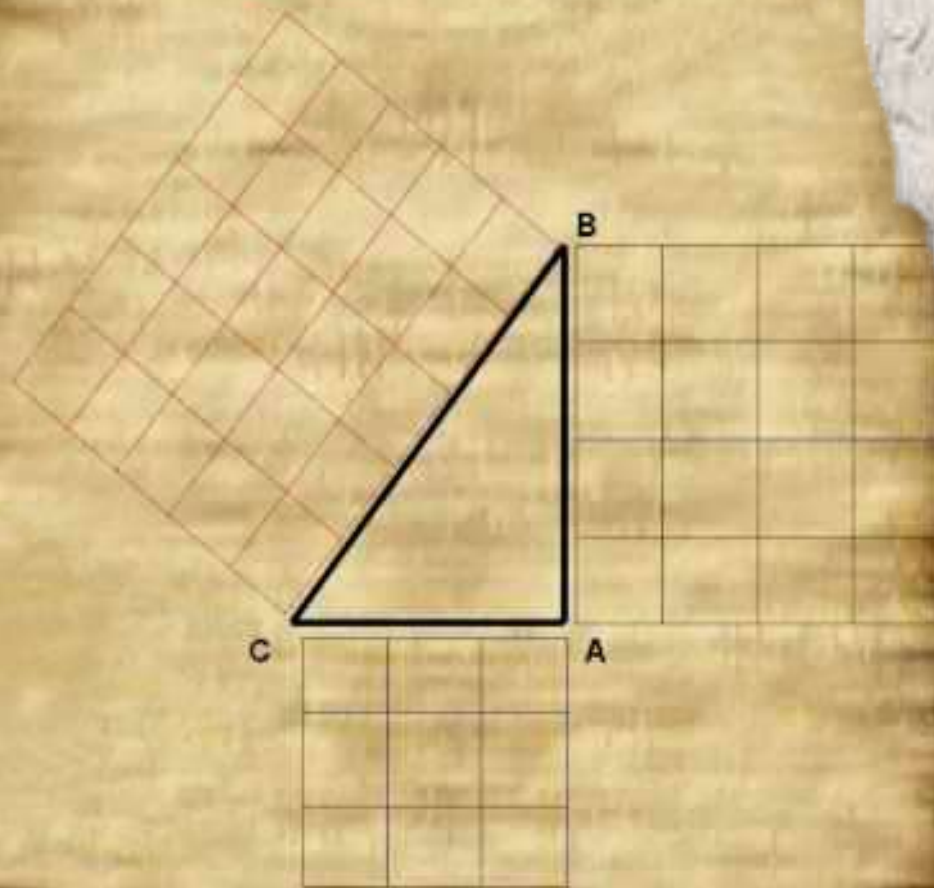


THE GOLDEN VERSES OF PYTHAGORAS



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1. First worship the Immortal Gods, as they are established and ordained by the Law.
2. Reverence the Oath, and next the Heroes, full of goodness and light.
3. Honour likewise the Terrestrial Dæmons by rendering them the worship lawfully due to them.
4. Honour likewise thy parents, and those most nearly related to thee.
5. Of all the rest of mankind, make him thy friend who distinguishes himself by his virtue.
6. Always give ear to his mild exhortations, and take example from his virtuous and useful actions.
7. Avoid as much as possible hating thy friend for a slight fault.
8. [And understand that] power is a near neighbour to necessity.
9. Know that all these things are as I have told thee; and accustom thyself to overcome and vanquish these passions:--
10. First gluttony, sloth, sensuality, and anger.
11. Do nothing evil, neither in the presence of others, nor privately;
12. But above all things respect thyself.
13. In the next place, observe justice in thy actions and in thy words.
14. And accustom not thyself to behave thyself in any thing without rule, and without reason.
15. But always make this reflection, that it is ordained by destiny that all men shall die.
16. And that the goods of fortune are uncertain; and that as they may be acquired, so may they likewise be lost.
17. Concerning all the calamities that men suffer by divine fortune,

18. Support with patience thy lot, be it what it may, and never repine at it.
19. But endeavour what thou canst to remedy it.
20. And consider that fate does not send the greatest portion of these misfortunes to good men.
21. There are among men many sorts of reasonings, good and bad;
22. Admire them not too easily, nor reject them.
23. But if falsehoods be advanced, hear them with mildness, and arm thyself with patience.
24. Observe well, on every occasion, what I am going to tell thee:--
25. Let no man either by his words, or by his deeds, ever seduce thee.
26. Nor entice thee to say or to do what is not profitable for thyself.
27. Consult and deliberate before thou act, that thou mayest not commit foolish actions.
28. For it is the part of a miserable man to speak and to act without reflection.
29. But do that which will not afflict thee afterwards, nor oblige thee to repentance.
30. Never do anything which thou dost not understand.
31. But learn all thou ought'st to know, and by that means thou wilt lead a very pleasant life.
32. In no wise neglect the health of thy body;
33. But give it drink and meat in due measure, and also the exercise of which it has need.
34. Now by measure I mean what will not incommode thee.
35. Accustom thyself to a way of living that is neat and decent without luxury.
36. Avoid all things that will occasion envy.

37. And be not prodigal out of season, like one who knows not what is decent and honourable.
38. Neither be covetous nor niggardly; a due measure is excellent in these things.
39. Do only the things that cannot hurt thee, and deliberate before thou dost them.
40. Never suffer sleep to close thy eyelids, after thy going to bed,
41. Till thou hast examined by thy reason all thy actions of the day.
42. Wherein have I done amiss? What have I done? What have I omitted that I ought to have done?
43. If in this examination thou find that thou hast done amiss, reprimand thyself severely for it;
44. And if thou hast done any good, rejoice.
45. Practise thoroughly all these things; meditate on them well; thou oughtest to love them with all thy heart.
46. 'Tis they that will put thee in the way of divine virtue.
47. I swear it by him who has transmitted into our souls the Sacred Quaternion, the source of nature, whose cause is eternal.
48. But never begin to set thy hand to any work, till thou hast first prayed the gods to accomplish what thou art going to begin.
49. When thou hast made this habit familiar to thee,
50. Thou wilt know the constitution of the Immortal Gods and of men.
51. Even how far the different beings extend, and what contains and binds them together.
52. Thou shalt likewise know that according to Law, the nature of this universe is in all things alike,
53. So that thou shalt not hope what thou ought'st not to hope; and nothing in this world shall be hid from thee.

54. Thou wilt likewise know, that men draw upon themselves their own misfortunes voluntarily, and of their own free choice.
55. Unhappy that they are! They neither see nor understand that their good is near them.
56. Few know how to deliver themselves out of their misfortunes.
57. Such is the fate that blinds mankind, and takes away his senses.
58. Like huge cylinders they roll to and fro, and always oppressed with ills innumerable.
59. For fatal strife, innate, pursues them everywhere, tossing them up and down; nor do they perceive it.
60. Instead of provoking and stirring it up, they ought, by yielding, to avoid it.
61. Oh! Jupiter, our Father! if Thou would'st deliver men from all the evils that oppress them,
62. Show them of what dæmon they make use.
63. But take courage; the race of man is divine.
64. Sacred nature reveals to them the most hidden mysteries.
65. If she impart to thee her secrets, thou wilt easily perform all the things which I have ordained thee.
66. And by the healing of thy soul, thou wilt deliver it from all evils, from all afflictions.
67. But abstain thou from the meats, which we have forbidden in the purifications and in the deliverance of the soul;
68. Make a just distinction of them, and examine all things well.
69. Leaving thyself always to be guided and directed by the understanding that comes from above, and that ought to hold the reins.
70. And when, after having divested thyself of thy mortal body, thou arrivest at the most pure Æther,

71. Thou shalt be a God, immortal, incorruptible, and Death shall have no more dominion over thee.