

# DIOGENES LAËRTIUS

## c. 220 CE

### BOOK VIII.

#### LIFE OF PYTHAGORAS.

I. Since we have now gone through the Ionian philosophy, which was derived from Thales, and the lives of the several illustrious men who were the chief ornaments of that school; we will now proceed to treat of the Italian School, which was founded by Pythagoras, the son of Mnesarchus, a seal engraver, as he is recorded to have been by Hermippus; a native of Samos, or as Aristoxenus asserts, a Tyrrhenian, and a native of one of the islands which the Athenians occupied after they had driven out the Tyrrhenians. But some authors say that he was the son of Marmacus, the son of Hippasus, the son of Euthyphron, the son of Cleonymus, who was an exile from Phlias; and that Marmacus settled in Samos, and that from this circumstance Pythagoras was called a Samian. After that he migrated to Lesbos, having come to Pherecydes with letters of recommendation from Zoilus, his uncle. And having made three silver goblets, he carried them to Egypt as a present for each of the three priests. He had brothers, the eldest of whom was named Eunomus, the middle one Tyrrhenus, and a slave named Zamolxis, to whom the Getæ sacrifice, believing him to be the same as Saturn, according to the account of Herodotus.

II. He was a pupil, as I have already mentioned, of Pherecydes, the Syrian; and after his death he came to Samos, and became a pupil of Hermodamas, the descendant of Creophylus, who was by this time an old man.

III. And as he was a young man, and devoted to learning, he quitted his country, and got initiated into all the Grecian and barbarian sacred mysteries. Accordingly, he went to Egypt, on which occasion Polycrates gave him a letter of introduction to Amasis; and he learnt the Egyptian language, as Antipho tells us, in his treatise on those men who have been conspicuous for virtue, and he associated with the Chaldæans and with the Magi.

Afterwards he went to Crete, and in company with Epimenides, he descended into the Idæan cave, (and in Egypt too, he entered into the holiest parts of their temples,) and learned all the most secret mysteries that relate to their Gods. Then he returned back again to Samos, and finding his country reduced under the absolute dominion of Polycrates, he set sail, and fled to Crotona in Italy. And there, having given laws to the Italians, he gained a very high reputation, together with his scholars, who were about three hundred in number, and governed the republic in a most excellent manner; so that the constitution was very nearly an aristocracy.

IV. Heraclides Ponticus says, that he was accustomed to speak of himself in this manner; that he had formerly been Æthalides, and had been accounted the son of Mercury; and that Mercury had desired him to select any gift he pleased except

immortality. And that he accordingly had requested that, whether living or dead, he might preserve the memory of what had happened to him. While, therefore, he was alive, he recollected everything; and when he was dead, he retained the same memory. And at a subsequent period he passed into Euphorbus, and was wounded by Menelaus. And while he was Euphorbus, he used to say that he had formerly been Æthalides; and that he had received as a gift from Mercury the perpetual transmigration of his soul, so that it was constantly transmigrating and passing into whatever plants or animals it pleased; and he had also received the gift of knowing and recollecting all that his soul had suffered in hell, and what sufferings too are endured by the rest of the souls.

But after Euphorbus died, he said that his soul had passed into Hermotimus; and when he wished to convince people of this, he went into the territory of the Branchidæ, and going into the temple of Apollo, he showed his shield which Menelaus had dedicated there as an offering. For he said that he, when he sailed from Troy, had offered up his shield which was already getting worn out, to Apollo, and that nothing remained but the ivory face which was on it. And when Hermotimus died, then he said that he had become Pyrrhus, a fisherman of Delos; and that he still recollected everything, how he had been formerly Æthalides, then Euphorbus, then Hermotimus, and then Pyrrhus. And when Pyrrhus died, he became Pythagoras, and still recollected all the circumstances that I have been mentioning.

V. Now, some people say that Pythagoras did not leave behind him a single book; but they talk foolishly; for Heraclitus, the natural philosopher, speaks plainly enough of him, saying, "Pythagoras, the son of Mnesarchus, was the most learned of all men in history; and having selected from these writings, he thus formed his own wisdom and extensive learning, and mischievous art." And he speaks thus, because Pythagoras, in the beginning of his treatise on Natural Philosophy, writes in the following manner: "By the air which I breathe, and by the water which I drink, I will not endure to be blamed on account of this discourse."

And there are three volumes extant written by Pythagoras. One on Education; one on Politics; and one on Natural Philosophy. But the treatise which is now extant under the name of Pythagoras is the work of Lysis, of Tarentum, a philosopher of the Pythagorean School, who fled to Thebes, and became the master of Epaminondas. And Heraclides, the son of Sarapion, in his Abridgment of Sotion, says that he wrote a poem in epic verse on the Universe; and besides that a sacred poem, which begins thus;—

Dear youths, I warn you cherish peace divine,  
And in your hearts lay deep these words of mine.

A third about the Soul; a fourth on Piety; a fifth entitled Helothales, which was the name of the father of Epicharmus, of Cos; a sixth called Crotona, and other poems too. But the mystic discourse which is extant under his name, they say is really the work of Hippasus, having been composed with a view to bring Pythagoras into

disrepute. There were also many other books composed by Aston, of Crotona, and attributed to Pythagoras.

Aristoxenus asserts that Pythagoras derived the greater part of his ethical doctrines from Themistoclea, the priestess at Delphi. And Ion, of Chios, in his *Victories*, says that he wrote some poems and attributed them to Orpheus. They also say that the poem called the *Scopiadæ* is by him, which begins thus:—

Behave not shamelessly to any one.

VI. And Sosicrates, in his *Successions*, relates that he, having being asked by Leon, the tyrant of the Phliasians, who he was, replied, “A philosopher.” And adds, that he used to compare life to a festival. “And as some people came to a festival to contend for the prizes, and others for the purposes of traffic, and the best as spectators; so also in life, the men of slavish dispositions,” said he, “are born hunters after glory and covetousness, but philosophers are seekers after truth.” And thus he spoke on this subject. But in the three treatises above mentioned, the following principles are laid down by Pythagoras generally.

He forbids men to pray for anything in particular for themselves, because they do not know what is good for them. He calls drunkenness an expression identical with ruin, and rejects all superfluity, saying, “That no one ought to exceed the proper quantity of meat and drink.” And on the subject of venereal pleasures, he speaks thus:—“One ought to sacrifice to Venus in the winter, not in the summer; and in autumn and spring in a lesser degree. But the practice is pernicious at every season, and is never good for the health.” And once, when he was asked when a man might indulge in the pleasures of love, he replied, “Whenever you wish to be weaker than yourself.”

VII. And he divides the life of man thus. A boy for twenty years; a young man (*νεάνισκος*) for twenty years; a middle-aged man (*νεανίας*) for twenty years; an old man for twenty years. And these different ages correspond proportionably to the seasons: boyhood answers to spring; youth to summer; middle age to autumn; and old age to winter. And he uses *νεάνισκος* here as equivalent to *μειράκιον*, and *νεανίας* as equivalent to *ἀνήρ*.

VIII. He was the first person, as Timæus says, who asserted that the property of friends is common, and that friendship is equality. And his disciples used to put all their possessions together into one store, and use them in common; and for five years they kept silence, doing nothing but listen to discourses, and never once seeing Pythagoras, until they were approved; after that time they were admitted into his house, and allowed to see him. They also abstained from the use of cypress coffins, because the sceptre of Jupiter was made of that wood, as Hermippus tells us in the second book of his account of Pythagoras.

IX. He is said to have been a man of the most dignified appearance, and his disciples adopted an opinion respecting him, that he was Apollo who had come from the Hyperboreans; and it is said, that once when he was stripped naked, he was seen

to have a golden thigh. And there were many people who affirmed, that when he was crossing the river Nessus it addressed him by his name.

X. Timæus, in the tenth book of his Histories, tells us, that he used to say that women who were married to men had the names of the Gods, being successively called virgins, then nymphs, and subsequently mothers.

XI. It was Pythagoras also who carried geometry to perfection, after Mœris had first found out the principles of the elements of that science, as Aristiclides tells us in the second book of his History of Alexander; and the part of the science to which Pythagoras applied himself above all others was arithmetic. He also discovered the numerical relation of sounds on a single string: he also studied medicine. And Apollodorus, the logician, records of him, that he sacrificed a hecatomb, when he had discovered that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the squares of the sides containing the right angle. And there is an epigram which is couched in the following terms:—

When the great Samian sage his noble problem found,  
A hundred oxen dyed with their life-blood the ground.

XII. He is also said to have been the first man who trained athletes on meat; and Eurymenes was the first man, according to the statement of Phavorinus, in the third book of his Commentaries, who ever did submit to this diet, as before that time men used to train themselves on dry figs and moist cheese, and wheaten bread; as the same Phavorinus informs us in the eighth book of his Universal History. But some authors state, that a trainer of the name of Pythagoras certainly did train his athletes on this system, but that it was not our philosopher; for that he even forbade men to kill animals at all, much less would have allowed his disciples to eat them, as having a right to live in common with mankind. And this was his pretext; but in reality he prohibited the eating of animals, because he wished to train and accustom men to simplicity of life, so that all their food should be easily procurable, as it would be, if they ate only such things as required no fire to dress them, and if they drank plain water; for from this diet they would derive health of body and acuteness of intellect.

The only altar at which he worshipped was that of Apollo the Father, at Delos, which is at the back of the altar of Ceratinus, because wheat, and barley, and cheese-cakes are the only offerings laid upon it, being not dressed by fire; and no victim is ever slain there, as Aristotle tells us in his Constitution of the Delians. They say, too, that he was the first person who asserted that the soul went a necessary circle being changed about and confined at different times in different bodies.

XIII. He was also the first person who introduced measures and weights among the Greeks; as Aristoxenus the musician informs us.

XIV. Parmenides, too, assures us, that he was the first person who asserted the identity of Hesperus and Lucifer.

XV. And he was so greatly admired, that they used to say that his friends looked on all his sayings as the oracles of God. And he himself says in his writings, that he

had come among men after having spent two hundred and seven years in the shades below. Therefore the Lucanians and the Peucetians, and the Messapians, and the Romans, flocked around him, coming with eagerness to hear his discourses; but until the time of Philolaus there were no doctrines of Pythagoras ever divulged; and he was the first person who published the three celebrated books which Plato wrote to have purchased for him for a hundred minæ. Nor were the number of his scholars who used to come to him by night fewer than six hundred. And if any of them had ever been permitted to see him, they wrote of it to their friends, as if they had gained some great advantage.

The people of Metapontum used to call his house the temple of Ceres; and the street leading to it they called the street of the Muses, as we are told by Phavorinus in his Universal History.

And the rest of the Pythagoreans used to say, according to the account given by Aristoxenus, in the tenth book of his Laws on Education, that his precepts ought not to be divulged to all the world; and Xenophilus, the Pythagorean, when he was asked what was the best way for a man to educate his son, said, "That he must first of all take care that he was born in a city which enjoyed good laws."

Pythagoras, too, formed many excellent men in Italy, by his precepts, and among them Zaleucus, and Charondas, the lawgivers.

XVI. For he was very eminent for his power of attracting friendships; and among other things, if ever he heard that any one had any community of symbols with him, he at once made him a companion and a friend.

XVII. Now, what he called his symbols were such as these. "Do not stir the fire with a sword." "Do not sit down on a bushel." "Do not devour your heart." "Do not aid men in discarding a burden, but in increasing one." "Always have your bed packed up." "Do not bear the image of a God on a ring." "Efface the traces of a pot in the ashes." "Do not wipe a seat with a lamp." "Do not make water in the sunshine." "Do not walk in the main street." "Do not offer your right hand lightly." "Do not cherish swallows under your roof." "Do not cherish birds with crooked talons." "Do not defile; and do not stand upon the parings of your nails, or the cuttings of your hair." "Avoid a sharp sword." "When you are travelling abroad, look not back at your own borders." Now the precept not to stir fire with a sword meant, not to provoke the anger or swelling pride of powerful men; not to violate the beam of the balance meant, not to transgress fairness and justice; not to sit on a bushel is to have an equal care for the present and for the future, for by the bushel is meant one's daily food. By not devouring one's heart, he intended to show that we ought not to waste away our souls with grief and sorrow. In the precept that a man when travelling abroad should not turn his eyes back, he recommended those who were departing from life not to be desirous to live, and not to be too much attracted by the pleasures here on earth. And the other symbols may be explained in a similar manner, that we may not be too prolix here.

XVIII. And above all things, he used to prohibit the eating of the erythinus, and the melanurus; and also, he enjoined his disciples to abstain from the hearts of animals, and from beans. And Aristotle informs us, that he sometimes used also to add to these prohibitions paunches and mullet. And some authors assert that he himself used to be contented with honey and honeycomb, and bread, and that he never drank wine in the day time. And his desert was usually vegetables, either boiled or raw; and he very rarely ate fish. His dress was white, very clean, and his bed-clothes were also white, and woollen, for linen had not yet been introduced into that country. He was never known to have eaten too much, or to have drunk too much, or to indulge in the pleasures of love. He abstained wholly from laughter, and from all such indulgences as jests and idle stories. And when he was angry, he never chastised any one, whether slave or freeman. He used to call admonishing, feeding storks.

He used to practise divination, as far as auguries and auspices go, but not by means of burnt offerings, except only the burning of frankincense. And all the sacrifices which he offered consisted of inanimate things. But some, however, assert that he did sacrifice animals, limiting himself to cocks, and sucking kids, which are called *ἀπάλιοι*, but that he very rarely offered lambs. Aristoxenus, however, affirms that he permitted the eating of all other animals, and only abstained from oxen used in agriculture, and from rams.

XIX. The same author tells us, as I have already mentioned, that he received his doctrines from Themistoclea, at Delphi. And Hieronymus says, that when he descended to the shades below, he saw the soul of Hesiod bound to a brazen pillar, and gnashing its teeth; and that of Homer suspended from a tree, and snakes around it, as a punishment for the things that they had said of the Gods. And that those people also were punished who refrained from commerce with their wives; and that on account of this he was greatly honoured by the people of Crotona.

But Aristippus, of Cyrene, in his Account of Natural Philosophers, says that Pythagoras derived his name from the fact of his speaking (*ἀγορεύειν*) truth no less than the God at Delphi (*τοῦ πυθίου*).

It is said that he used to admonish his disciples to repeat these lines to themselves whenever they returned home to their houses:—

In what have I transgress'd? What have I done?  
What that I should have done have I omitted?

And that he used to forbid them to offer victims to the Gods, ordering them to worship only at those altars which were unstained with blood. He forbade them also to swear by the Gods; saying, “That every man ought so to exercise himself, as to be worthy of belief without an oath.” He also taught men that it behoved them to honour their elders, thinking that which was precedent in point of time more honourable; just as in the world, the rising of the sun was more so than the setting; in life, the beginning more so than the end; and in animals, production more so than destruction.

Another of his rules was that men should honour the Gods above the dæmones, heroes above men; and of all men parents were entitled to the highest degree of reverence. Another, that people should associate with one another in such a way as not to make their friends enemies, but to render their enemies friends. Another was that they should think nothing exclusively their own. Another was to assist the law, and to make war upon lawlessness. Not to destroy or injure a cultivated tree, nor any animal either which does not injure men. That modesty and decorum consisted in never yielding to laughter, and yet not looking stern. He taught that men should avoid too much flesh, that they should in travelling let rest and exertion alternate; that they should exercise memory; that they should never say or do anything in anger; that they should not pay respect to every kind of divination; that they should use songs set to the lyre; and by hymns to the Gods and to eminent men, display a reasonable gratitude to them.

He also forbade his disciples to eat beans, because, as they were flatulent, they greatly partook of animal properties he also said that men kept their stomachs in better order by avoiding them; and that such abstinence made the visions which appear in one's sleep gentle and free from agitation. Alexander also says, in his Successions of Philosophers, that he found the following dogmas also set down in the Commentaries of Pythagoras:—

That the monad was the beginning of everything. From the monad proceeds an indefinite duad, which is subordinate to the monad as to its cause. That from the monad and the indefinite duad proceed numbers. And from numbers signs. And from these last, lines of which plane figures consist. And from plane figures are derived solid bodies. And from solid bodies sensible bodies, of which last there are four elements; fire, water, earth, and air. And that the world, which is endued with life, and intellect, and which is of a spherical figure, having the earth, which is also spherical, and inhabited all over in its centre, results from a combination of these elements, and derives its motion from them; and also that there are antipodes, and that what is below, as respects us, is above in respect of them.

He also taught that light and darkness and cold and heat, and dryness and moisture, were equally divided in the world; and that, while heat was predominant it was summer; while cold had the mastery it was winter; when dryness prevailed it was spring; and when moisture preponderated, winter. And while all these qualities were on a level, then was the loveliest season of the year; of which the flourishing spring was the wholesome period, and the season of autumn the most pernicious one. Of the day, he said that the flourishing period was the morning, and the fading one the evening; on which account that also was the least healthy time.

Another of his theories was, that the air around the earth was immoveable, and pregnant with disease, and that everything in it was mortal; but that the upper air was in perpetual motion, and pure and salubrious; and that everything in that was immortal, and on that account divine. And that the sun, and the moon, and the stars, were all Gods; for in them the warm principle predominates which is the cause of life. And that the moon derives its light from the sun. And that there is a relationship

between men and the Gods, because men partake of the divine principle; on which account also, God exercises his providence for our advantage. Also, that fate is the cause of the arrangement of the world both generally and particularly. Moreover, that a ray from the sun penetrated both the cold æther and the dense æther; and they call the air (ἀήρ), the cold æther (ψυχρὸν αἰθέρα), and the sea and moisture they call the dense æther (παχὸν αἰθέρα). And this ray descends into the depths, and in this way vivifies everything. And everything which partakes of the principle of heat lives, on which account also plants are animated beings; but that all living things have not necessarily souls. And that the soul is a something torn off from the æther, both warm and cold, from its partaking of the cold æther. And that the soul is something different from life. Also, that it is immortal, because that from which it has been detached is immortal.

Also, that animals are born from one another by seeds, and that it is impossible for there to be any spontaneous production by the earth. And that seed is a drop from the brain which contains in itself a warm vapour; and that when this is applied to the womb, it transmits virtue, and moisture, and blood from the brain, from which flesh, and sinews, and bones, and hair, and the whole body are produced. And from the vapour is produced the soul, and also sensation. And that the infant first becomes a solid body at the end of forty days; but, according to the principles of harmony, it is not perfect till seven, or perhaps nine, or at most ten months, and then it is brought forth. And that it contains in itself all the principles of life, which are all connected together, and by their union and combination form a harmonious whole, each of them developing itself at the appointed time.

The senses in general, and especially the sight, are a vapour of excessive warmth, and on this account a man is said to see through air, and through water. For the hot principle is opposed by the cold one; since, if the vapour in the eyes were cold, it would have the same temperature as the air, and so would be dissipated. As it is, in some passages he calls the eyes the gates of the sun. And he speaks in a similar manner of hearing, and of the other senses.

He also says that the soul of man is divided into three parts; into intuition (νοῦς), and reason (φρήν), and mind (θυμὸς), and that the first and last divisions are found also in other animals, but that the middle one, reason, is only found in man. And that the chief abode of the soul is in those parts of the body which are between the heart and the brain. And that that portion of it which is in the heart is the mind (θυμὸς); but that deliberation (νοῦς), and reason (φρήν), reside in the brain.

Moreover, that the senses are drops from them; and that the reasoning sense is immortal, but the others are mortal. And that the soul is nourished by the blood; and that reasons are the winds of the soul. That it is invisible, and so are its reasons, since the æther itself is invisible. That the links of the soul are the veins, and the arteries, and the nerves. But that when it is vigorous, and is by itself in a quiescent state, then its links are words and actions. That when it is cast forth upon the earth it wanders about, resembling the body. Moreover, that Mercury is the steward of the souls, and that on this account he has the name of Conductor, and Commercial, and Infernal,

since it is he who conducts the souls from their bodies, and from earth, and sea; and that he conducts the pure souls to the highest region, and that he does not allow the impure ones to approach them, nor to come near one another; but commits them to be bound in indissoluble fetters by the Furies. The Pythagoreans also assert, that the whole air is full of souls, and that these are those which are accounted dæmones, and heroes. Also, that it is by them that dreams are sent among men, and also the tokens of disease and health; these last too, being sent not only to men, but to sheep also, and other cattle. Also, that it is they who are concerned with purifications, and expiations, and all kinds of divination, and oracular predictions, and things of that kind.

They also say, that the most important privilege in man is, the being able to persuade his soul to either good or bad. And that men are happy when they have a good soul; yet, that they are never quiet, and that they never retain the same mind long. Also, that an oath is justice; and that on that account, Jupiter is called Jupiter of Oaths (Ὀρκιος). Also, that virtue is harmony, and health, and universal good, and God; on which account everything owes its existence and consistency to harmony. Also, that friendship is a harmonious equality.

Again, they teach that one ought not to pay equal honours to Gods and to heroes; but that one ought to honour the Gods at all times, extolling them with praises, clothed in white garments, and keeping one's body chaste; but that one ought not to pay such honour to the heroes till after midday. Also, that a state of purity is brought about by purifications, and washings, and sprinklings, and by a man's purifying himself from all funerals, or concubinage, or pollution of every kind, and by abstaining from all flesh that has either been killed or died of itself, and from mullets, and from melanuri, and from eggs, and from such animals as lay eggs, and from beans, and from other things which are prohibited by those who have the charge of the mysteries in the temples.

And Aristotle says, in his treatise on Beans, that Pythagoras enjoined his disciples to abstain from beans, either because they resemble some part of the human body, or because they are like the gates of hell (for they are the only plants without parts); or because they dry up other plants, or because they are representatives of universal nature, or because they are used in elections in oligarchical governments. He also forbade his disciples to pick up what fell from the table, for the sake of accustoming them not to eat immoderately, or else because such things belong to the dead.

But Aristophanes says, that what falls belongs to the heroes; saying, in his Heroes:—

Never taste the things which fall  
From the table on the floor.

He also forbade his disciples to eat white poultry, because a cock of that colour was sacred to Month, and was also a suppliant. He was also accounted a good animal; and he was sacred to the God Month, for he indicates the time.

The Pythagoreans were also forbidden to eat of all fish that were sacred; on the ground that the same animals ought not to be served up before both Gods and men, just as the same things do not belong to freemen and to slaves. Now, white is an indication of a good nature, and black of a bad one. Another of the precepts of Pythagoras was, that men ought not to break bread; because in ancient times friends used to assemble around one loaf, as they even now do among the barbarians. Nor would he allow men to divide bread which unites them. Some think that he laid down this rule in reference to the judgment which takes place in hell; some because this practice engenders timidity in war. According to others, what is alluded to is the Union, which presides over the government of the universe.

Another of his doctrines was, that of all solid figures the sphere was the most beautiful; and of all plane figures, the circle. That old age and all diminution were similar, and also increase and youth were identical. That health was the permanence of form, and disease the destruction of it. Of salt his opinion was, that it ought to be set before people as a reminder of justice; for salt preserves everything which it touches, and it is composed of the purest particles of water and sea.

These are the doctrines which Alexander asserts that he discovered in the Pythagorean treatises; and Aristotle gives a similar account of them.

XV. Timon, in his Silli, has not left unnoticed the dignified appearance of Pythagoras, when he attacks him on other points. And his words are these:—

Pythagoras, who often teaches  
Precepts of magic, and with speeches  
Of long high-sounding diction draws,  
From gaping crowds, a vain applause.

And respecting his having been different people at different times, Xenophanes adds his evidence in an elegiac poem which commences thus:—

Now I will on another subject touch,  
And lead the way.

And the passage in which he mentions Pythagoras is as follows:—

They say that once, as passing by he saw  
A dog severely beaten, he did pity him,  
And spoke as follows to the man who beat him:—  
“Stop now, and beat him not; since in his body,  
Abides the soul of a dear friend of mine,  
Whose voice I recognized as he was crying.”

These are the words of Xenophanes.

Cratinus also ridiculed him in his Pythagorean Woman; but in his Tarentines, he speaks thus:—

They are accustomed, if by chance they see  
A private individual abroad,

To try what powers of argument he has,  
How he can speak and reason: and they bother him  
With strange antithesis and forced conclusions,  
Errors, comparisons, and magnitudes,  
Till they have filled and quite perplex'd his mind.

And Mnesimachus says in his *Alcmæon*:—

As we do sacrifice to the Phœbus whom  
Pythagoras worships, never eating aught  
Which has the breath of life.

Aristophon says in his *Pythagorean*:—

A. He said that when he did descend below  
Among the shades in Hell, he there beheld  
All men who e'er had died; and there he saw,  
That the Pythagoreans differ'd much  
From all the rest; for that with them alone  
Did Pluto deign to eat, much honouring  
Their pious habits.

B. He's a civil God,  
If he likes eating with such dirty fellows.

And again, in the same play he says:—

They eat  
Nothing but herbs and vegetables, and drink  
Pure water only. But their lice are such,  
Their cloaks so dirty, and their unwash'd scent  
So rank, that no one of our younger men  
Will for a moment bear them.

XXI. Pythagoras died in this manner. When he was sitting with some of his companions in Milo's house, some one of those whom he did not think worthy of admission into it, was excited by envy to set fire to it. But some say that the people of Crotona themselves did this, being afraid lest he might aspire to the tyranny. And that Pythagoras was caught as he was trying to escape; and coming to a place full of beans, he stopped there, saying that it was better to be caught than to trample on the beans, and better to be slain than to speak; and so he was murdered by those who were pursuing him. And in this way, also, most of his companions were slain; being in number about forty; but that a very few did escape, among whom were Archippus, of Tarentum, and Lysis, whom I have mentioned before.

But Dicæarchus relates that Pythagoras died afterwards, having escaped as far as the temple of the Muses, at Metapontum, and that he died there of starvation, having abstained from food for forty days. And Heraclides says, in his abridgment of the

life of Satyrus, that after he had buried Pherecydes in Delos, he returned to Italy, and finding there a superb banquet prepared at the house of Milo, of Crotona, he left Crotona, and went to Metapontum, and there put an end to his life by starvation, not wishing to live any longer. But Hermippus says, that when there was war between the people of Agrigentum and the Syracusans, Pythagoras went out with his usual companions, and took the part of the Agrigentines; and as they were put to flight, he ran all round a field of beans, instead of crossing it, and so was slain by the Syracusans; and that the rest, being about five-and-thirty in number, were burnt at Tarentum, when they were trying to excite a sedition in the state against the principal magistrates.

Hermippus also relates another story about Pythagoras. For he says that when he was in Italy, he made a subterraneous apartment, and charged his mother to write an account of everything that took place, marking the time of each on a tablet, and then to send them down to him, until he came up again; and that his mother did so; and that Pythagoras came up again after a certain time, lean, and reduced to a skeleton; and that he came into the public assembly, and said that he had arrived from the shades below, and then he recited to them all that had happened during his absence. And they, being charmed by what he told them, wept and lamented, and believed that Pythagoras was a divine being; so that they even entrusted their wives to him, as likely to learn some good from him; and that they too were called Pythagoreans. And this is the story of Hermippus.

XXII. And Pythagoras had a wife, whose name was Theano; the daughter of Brontinus, of Crotona. But some say that she was the wife of Brontinus, and only a pupil of Pythagoras. And he had a daughter named Damo, as Lysis mentions in his letter to Hipparchus; where he speaks thus of Pythagoras: “And many say that you philosophize in public, as Pythagoras also used to do; who, when he had entrusted his Commentaries to Damo, his daughter, charged her to divulge them to no person out of the house. And she, though she might have sold his discourses for much money, would not abandon them, for she thought poverty and obedience to her father’s injunctions more valuable than gold; and that too, though she was a woman.”

He had also a son, named Telauges, who was the successor of his father in his school, and who, according to some authors, was the teacher of Empedocles. At least Hippobotus relates that Empedocles said:—

“Telauges, noble youth, whom in due time,  
Theano bore to wise Pythagoras.”

But there is no book extant, which is the work of Telauges though there are some extant, which are attributed to his mother Theano. And they tell a story of her, that once, when she was asked how long a woman ought to be absent from her husband to be pure, she said, the moment she leaves her own husband, she is pure; but she is never pure at all, after she leaves any one else. And she recommended a woman, who was going to her husband, to put off her modesty with her clothes, and when

she left him, to resume it again with her clothes; and when she was asked, “What clothes?” she said, “Those which cause you to be called a woman.”

XXIII. Now Pythagoras, as Heraclides, the son of Sarapion, relates, died when he was eighty years of age; according to his own account of his age, but according to the common account, he was more than ninety. And we have written a sportive epigram on him, which is couched in the following terms:—

You're not the only man who has abstained  
From living food, for so likewise have we;  
And who, I'd like to know did ever taste  
Food while alive, most sage Pythagoras?  
When meat is boil'd, or roasted well and salted,  
I don't think it can well be called living.  
Which, therefore, without scruple then we eat it,  
And call it no more living flesh, but meat.

And another, which runs thus:—

Pythagoras was so wise a man, that he  
Never eat meat himself, and called it sin.  
And yet he gave good joints of beef to others.  
So that I marvel at his principles;  
Who others wronged, by teaching them to do  
What he believed unholy for himself.

And another, as follows:—

Should you Pythagoras' doctrine wish to know,  
Look on the centre of Euphorbus' shield.  
For he asserts there lived a man of old,  
And when he had no longer an existence,  
He still could say that he had been alive,  
Or else he would not still be living now.

And this one too:

Alas! alas! why did Pythagoras hold  
Beans in such wondrous honour? Why, besides,  
Did he thus die among his choice companions  
There was a field of beans; and so the sage,  
Died in the common road of Agrigentum,  
Rather than trample down his favourite beans.

XXIV. And he flourished about the sixtieth olympiad; and his system lasted for nine or ten generations. And the last of the Pythagoreans, whom Aristoxenus knew, were Xenophilus, the Chalcidean, from Thrace; and Phanton, the Phliasian, and Echecrates, and Diodes, and Polymnestus, who were also Phliasians, and they were disciples of Philolaus and Eurytus, of Tarentum.

XXV. And there were four men of the name of Pythagoras, about the same time, at no great distance from one another. One was a native of Crotona, a man who attained tyrannical power; the second was a Phliasian, a trainer of wrestlers, as some say; the third was a native of Zacynthus; the fourth was this our philosopher, to whom they say the mysteries of philosophy belong, in whose time that proverbial phrase, "Ipse dixit," was introduced into ordinary life. Some also affirm, that there was another man of the name of Pythagoras, a statuary of Rhodes; who is believed to have been the first discoverer of rhythm and proportion; and another was a Samian statuary; and another an orator, of no reputation; and another was a physician, who wrote a treatise on Squills; and also some essays on Homer; and another was a man, who wrote a history of the affairs of the Dorians, as we are told by Dionysius.

But Eratosthenes says, as Phavorinus quotes him, in the eighth book of his Universal History, that this philosopher, of whom we are speaking, was the first man who ever practised boxing in a scientific manner, in the forty-eighth olympiad, having his hair long, and being clothed in a purple robe; and that he was rejected from the competition among boys, and being ridiculed for his application, he immediately entered among the men, and came off victorious. And this statement is confirmed among other things, by the epigram which Theætetus composed:—

Stranger, if e'er you knew Pythagoras,  
Pythagoras, the man with flowing hair,  
The celebrated boxer, erst of Samos;  
I am Pythagoras. And if you ask  
A citizen of Elis of my deeds,  
You'll surely think he is relating fables.

Phavorinus says, that he employed definitions, on account of the mathematical subjects to which he applied himself. And that Socrates and those who were his pupils, did so still more; and that they were subsequently followed in this by Aristotle and the Stoics.

He too, was the first person, who ever gave the name of κόσμος to the universe, and the first who called the earth round; though Theophrastus attributes this to Parmenides, and Zeno to Hesiod. They say too, that Cylon used to be a constant adversary of his, as Antidicus was of Socrates. And this epigram also used to be repeated, concerning Pythagoras the athlete:—

Pythagoras of Samos, son of Crates,  
Came while a child to the Olympic games,  
Eager to battle for the prize in boxing.

XXVI. There is a letter of this philosopher extant, which is couched in the following terms:—

### **PYTHAGORAS TO ANAXIMENES.**

“You too, my most excellent friend, if you were not superior to Pythagoras, in birth and reputation, would have migrated from Miletus and gone elsewhere. But now the reputation of your father keeps you back, which perhaps would have restrained me too, if I had been like Anaximenes. But if you, who are the most eminent man, abandon the cities, all their ornaments will be taken from them, and the Median power will be more dangerous to them. Nor is it always seasonable to be studying astronomy, but it is more honourable to exhibit a regard for one’s country. And I myself am not always occupied about speculations of my own fancy, but I am busied also with the wars which the Italians are waging against one another.”

But since we have now finished our account of Pythagoras, we must also speak of the most eminent of the Pythagoreans. After whom, we must mention those who are spoken of more promiscuously in connection with no particular school; and then we will connect the whole series of philosophers worth speaking of, till we arrive at Epicurus, as we have already promised.

Now Telauges and Theano we have mentioned; and we must now speak of Empedocles, in the first place, for, according to some accounts, he was a pupil of Pythagoras.