



Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras

Thomas Taylor

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Authentic memoirs of the life of Pythagoras--the father of philosophy and the inventor of geometry--hold the great interest for every lover of wisdom. Iamblichus' biography is universally acknowledged as deriving from sources of the highest antiquity. Its classic translation by Thomas Taylor was first printed in 1818 and is once again brought to light in this edition.

During Iamblichus' life, the depth and sublimity of his writing and discourse attracted a multitude of associates and disciples from all parts of the world. The Emperor Julian wrote of him, "that he was posterior indeed in time, but not in genius, to Plato," and all the Platonists who succeeded him honored him with the epithet of "divine."

Iamblichus' account of the life of Pythagoras begins with the great philosopher's birth on the island of Samos, his youth, and his wide renown in Greece. It briefly covers his early travels and his studies with the philosophers Anaximander and Thales, his twenty-two years of instruction in the temples of Egypt, and his initiation into the Egyptian and Babylonian mysteries. The later life and work of Pythagoras are richly elaborated, with humorous and profound anecdotes illustrating his philosophy and providing a unique view of community life under his tutelage in Crotona.

Included are excerpts from his teachings on harmonic science, dietetic medicine, friendship, temperance, politics, parenthood, the soul's former lives and many other topics. The book also contains substantial sections on the Fragments of the Ethical Writings (the work of very early Pythagoreans) and the Pythagoric Sentences.

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