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Date of original content (Approximate): October, 2014

Format: Self-reminder

Subject (Approximate): Acceptance, patience, self-awareness, judgment, assent.

Participants: 1

Part (if Applicable): 1 of 1

Synopsis: The content was written during my Senior year as an undergraduate. It concerns no particular situation, serving instead as a gentle reminder of the function, necessity, and benefits of compassionate behavior. In addition, it aimed to reaffirm external things as indifferent.

~ Start of Original Content ~

All are born as equals, all return as equals. All people receive the faculty of reason, and a body as a form. The manner in which we form judgments is the same: sense data combines with animalistic impulse to create a proposition. The proposition is then given assent, or withheld assent. A judgment follows.¹

A human being that does not recognize or ignores what is or is not appropriate for a rational being is susceptible to others on the basis of property and prestige; of being granted or withheld external things.²

A human being that recognizes or seeks to understand what is or is not appropriate for a rational being will view material things, reputation, and authority as means, and not ends in themselves. Such a person's role will be the service of the human community, and self-improvement. The roles entailed in this endeavor improve upon one another; through the support of others we strengthen our self-understanding. Through our self-improvement we better equip ourselves to assess appropriate actions towards others.³

¹ A person's account of each situation is first drawn from collected sensory data (termed an *impression*) combined with an involuntary value judgment (e.g. "this seems good/bad"). This results in a "*first movement of the soul*," and the formation of a "*proposition*." The *first movement* is the initial positive or negative response to the situation. The *proposition* is a framing of the situation that we can understand and believe (assent) or withhold belief/disbelieve (dissent). Assenting to the *proposition* (believing it to be true, whole, and accurate) heightens and reinforces the initial positive or negative sentiment, forming a "*second movement of the soul*."

² For Stoics, the only true good is Virtue, and the only true evil is Vice. External things may be preferred or not preferred, but are ultimately indifferent. The cultivation of Virtue or Vice depends upon the disposition of one's choices, i.e. it is within our control. Indifferents are fundamentally not within our control (despite appearances), as they can be directly or indirectly acted upon by outside forces. In short, the development of virtuous characteristics begins and ends within one's control – the exercise of choice. The attainment, maintenance, or loss of external things depends on more than our individual effort.

³ Humans are linked through the mutual possession of the faculty of reason – a property of social and rational animals. This link exists independent of circumstances of birth, and forms the groundwork for cooperation. The

Duty to ourselves and duty towards others facilitates independence, peace, and resilience of mind. This is because any action that is taken deliberately towards this end is an action that benefits regardless of the external results, by beginning and culminating in the self.

Virtuous acts improve the self. Vicious acts degrade the self.

~ End of Original Content ~

Stoics emphasize continually viewing others in light of this link as an extended family, assisting and guiding them as circumstances permit. To ignore or defy this aspect is to sever or isolate ourselves from one another, disrupting this link and our ability to progress as Stoics.