

PD03

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“The limit of great pleasures is the removal of everything which can give pain. And where pleasure is, as long as it lasts, that which gives pain, or that which feels pain, or both of them, are absent.” Yonge (1853)

“The magnitude of pleasures is limited by the removal of all pain. Wherever there is pleasure, so long as it is present, there is no pain either of body or of mind or both.” Hicks (1910)

“The magnitude of pleasure reaches its limit in the removal of all pain. When pleasure is present, so long as it is uninterrupted, there is no pain either of body or of mind or of both together.” Hicks (1925)

“The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body nor of mind, nor of both at once.” Bailey (1926)

“The removal of all pain is the limit of the magnitude of pleasures. And wherever the experience of pleasure is present, so long as it prevails, there is no pain or distress or a combination of them.” De Witt, Epicurus and His Philosophy 226, 241 (1954)

“The removal of all that causes pain marks the boundary of pleasure. Wherever pleasure is present and as long as it continues, there is neither suffering nor grieving nor both together.” Geer (1964)

“The removal of all pain is the limit of the magnitude of pleasures. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, pain or distress or their combination is absent.” Long, The Hellenistic Philosophers 115 (1987)

“The limit of the extent of pleasure is the removal of all pain. Wherever pleasure is present, for however long a time, there can be no pain or grief, or both of these.” O'Connor (1993)

“The removal of all feeling of pain is the limit of the magnitude of pleasures. Wherever a pleasurable feeling is present, for as long as it is present, there is neither a feeling of pain nor a feeling of distress, nor both together.” Inwood & Gerson (1994)

“Pleasure reaches its maximum limit at the removal of all sources of pain. When such pleasure is present, for as long as it lasts, there is no cause of physical nor mental pain present – nor of both together.” Anderson (2004)

“Pleasure has its <upper> limit in the removal of everything that produces pain. For, wherever that which produces pleasure resides, for as long as it abides, there can be nothing that produces pain, grief, or both.” Makridis (2005)

“The limit of enjoyment is the removal of all pains. Wherever and for however long pleasure is present, there is neither bodily pain nor mental distress.” Saint-Andre (2008)

“The quantitative limit of pleasure is the elimination of all feelings of pain. Wherever the pleasurable state exists, there is neither bodily pain nor mental pain nor both together, so long as the state continues.” Strodach (2012)

“The limit of pleasure is reached with the removal of all pain. Whenever pleasure is present, and for however long, there is neither pain nor grief nor any combination of the two.” Mensch (2018)

“The limit to the magnitude of pleasures is the elimination of everything painful; and wherever there is pleasant feeling, so long as it lasts, there is no painful feeling or sorrow, or both together.” White (2021)

FURTHER COMMENTARY:

PHILEBUS

PRO. Of course we do.

soc. We shall say that it belongs to the third class ; for that class is not formed by mixture of any two things, but of all the things which belong to the infinite, bound by the finite ; and therefore this victorious life would rightly be considered a part of this class.

PRO. Quite rightly.

soc. Well then, what of your life, Philebus, of unmixed pleasure ? In which of the aforesaid classes may it properly be said to belong ? But before you tell me, please answer this question.

PHI. Ask your question.

soc. Have pleasure and pain a limit, or are they among the things which admit of more and less ?

PHI. Yes, they are among those which admit of the more, Socrates ; for pleasure would not be absolute good if it were not infinite in number and degree.

soc. Nor would pain, Philebus, be absolute evil ; so it is not the infinite which supplies any element of good in pleasure ; we must look for something else. Well, I grant you that pleasure and pain are in the class of the infinite ; but to which of the aforesaid classes, Protarchus and Philebus, can we now without irreverence assign wisdom, knowledge,

Plato's Republic 586b (Book 9)

‘So if being filled with things appropriate to our nature is pleasurable, then that which is more genuinely filled, and filled with things which have
e more being, would make people more truly and genuinely happy, giving them true pleasure, whereas that which takes in things which have less being would be less truly and lastingly filled, and get hold of a pleasure which was less trustworthy and less true.’

‘That inescapably follows,’ he said.

586 ‘In which case, those who know nothing of wisdom and human excellence, who are always engaged in things like feasting, apparently go down to the region at the bottom and back again to the middle. They spend their whole lives wandering in this way. Higher than this they never go. They never look up at the true top, nor go there. They are not truly filled with true being, nor do they taste any lasting or pure pleasure. They are like cattle, their gaze constantly directed downwards. Eyes on the
b ground – or on the table – they fatten themselves at pasture, and rut. The struggle for these things makes them kick and butt – with horn and hoof of iron – until they kill one another. But they cannot be filled, since they do not fill the part of them which truly is, the retentive part, nor do they fill themselves *with* what truly is.’

‘Hear the words of the oracle,’ said Glaucon. ‘You have given us a full and complete description, Socrates, of the life most people lead.’

As to the second sentence of PD03, see DeWitt page 241:

must have been at one time arresting. It forms part of the famous tetra-pharmacon, Doctrine 3. The first part, already quoted, identifies the basic pleasure as freedom from pain, the only kind that could be **continuous**: "The removal of all pain is the limit of magnitude for pleasures." This rules out the "neutral state" as postulated by Plato; it identifies the neutral state as one of static pleasure. The second part of the Doctrine disposes of Plato's "mixed states": "And wherever the experience of pleasure is present, so long as it prevails, there is no pain or distress or a combination of them." This amounts to denying that pain and pleasure are capable of mixing and of resulting in a state that is different from either. Epicurus implies instead and elsewhere

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teaches that pain is subtractable from pleasure, leaving a balance of the latter.⁵⁷ This principle applies either to physical pain or mental distress or to both together. It is essential to the thesis that continuous pleasure is possible.

For Discussion of this topic in the forum see: [Doctrine 3 - The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal ...](#)