

77b2 {MEN.} Δοκεῖ τοίνυν μοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀρετὴ εἶναι, καθά-
77b3 περὶ ὃ ποιητὴς λέγει, "χαίρειν τε καλοῖσι καὶ δύνασθαι"
77b4 καὶ ἐγὼ τοῦτο λέγω ἀρετὴν, ἐπιθυμοῦντα τῶν καλῶν δυνατὸν
77b5 εἶναι πορίζεσθαι.

ME: I think, Socrates, that virtue is, as the poet says, "to find joy in beautiful things and have power." So I say that virtue is to desire beautiful things and to have the power to acquire them.

77b6 {ΣΩ.} Ἔρα λέγεις τὸν τῶν καλῶν ἐπιθυμοῦντα ἀγαθῶν
77b7 ἐπιθυμητὴν εἶναι; {—MEN.} Μάλιστα γέ.

SO: Do you mean that the man who desires beautiful things desires god things?

ME: Most certainly.

{—ΣΩ.} Ἔρα ὡς
77b8 ὄντων τινῶν οἱ τῶν κακῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν, ἐτέρων δὲ οἱ τῶν
77c1 ἀγαθῶν; οὐ πάντες, ὦριστε, δοκοῦσί σοι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπι-
77c2 θυμεῖν; {—MEN.} Οὐκ ἔμοιγε.

SO: Do you assume that there are people who desire bad things, and others who desire good things? Do you not think, my good man, that all men desire good things? / ME: I do not.

{—ΣΩ.} Ἄλλὰ τινες τῶν κακῶν;
77c3 {—MEN.} Ναί.

SO: But some desire bad things? / ME: Yes

{—ΣΩ.} Οἰόμενοι τὰ κακὰ ἀγαθὰ εἶναι, λέγεις,
77c4 ἢ καὶ γινώσκοντες ὅτι κακὰ ἐστὶν ὅμως ἐπιθυμοῦσιν αὐ-
77c5 τῶν; {—MEN.} Ἀμφοτέρω ἔμοιγε δοκοῦσιν.

SO: Do you mean that they believe the bad things to be good, or that they know they are bad and nevertheless desire them? / ME: I think there are both kinds.

{—ΣΩ.} Ἡ γὰρ
77c6 δοκεῖ τίς σοι, ὦ Μένων, γινώσκων τὰ κακὰ ὅτι κακὰ ἐστὶν
77c7 ὅμως ἐπιθυμεῖν αὐτῶν; {—MEN.} Μάλιστα.

SO: Do you think, Meno, that anyone, knowing that bad things are bad, nevertheless desires them? / ME: I certainly do.

{—ΣΩ.} Τί ἐπιθυ-
77c8 μεῖν λέγεις; ἢ γενέσθαι αὐτῶν; {—MEN.} Γενέσθαι· τί γὰρ
77d1 ἄλλο;

SO: What do you mean by desiring? Is it to secure for oneself?¹ / ME: What else?

1 That is, desiring x = desiring to secure x for oneself. Cf. Santas 1979, 184: "Meno agrees readily that desiring something is desiring to possess it." Santas (ibid. 184n14, p. 315) also adduces *Symp.* 204d5-7 and e2-4 where "we have exactly the same answers to similar questions"; for the relevant background, *Lysis* 221D-222 and *Symp.* 200A2 (sic! -- but he probably means 200A ff.) are referred to.

The passages in the *Symposium* mentioned earlier are these (tr. Nehamas and Woodruff).

204d3-7: ἔστι δὲ (sc. ὁ Ἔρως, d2-3) τῶν καλῶν, ὡς σὺ φήσ. εἰ δὲ τις ἡμᾶς / ἔροιτο· Τί τῶν καλῶν ἐστὶν ὁ Ἔρως, ὦ Σώκρατες τε / καὶ Διοτίμα; ὧδε δὲ σαφέστερον· ἐρᾷ ὁ ἐρῶν τῶν καλῶν / τί ἐρᾷ; / Καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον ὅτι Γενέσθαι αὐτῶν.

"... Now, according to you, he (viz. Love) is love for beautiful things. But suppose someone asks us, 'Socrates and Diotima, what's the point of loving beautiful things?' It's clearer this way: 'The lover of beautiful things has a desire; what does he desire?' -- "That they become his own", I said.

{-ΣΩ.} Πότερον ἡγούμενος τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν ἐκεῖνον

77d2 ᾧ ἂν γένηται, ἢ γινώσκων τὰ κακὰ ὅτι βλάπτει ᾧ ἂν

77d3 παρῆ; {-MEN.} Εἰσὶ μὲν οἱ ἡγούμενοι τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν,

77d4 εἰσὶν δὲ καὶ οἱ γινώσκοντες ὅτι βλάπτει.

SO: Does he think that the bad things benefit him who possesses them, or does he know they harm him?

ME: There are some who believe that the bad things benefit them, others who know that the bad things harm them.

{-ΣΩ.} Ἥ καὶ

77d5 δοκοῦσί σοι γινώσκειν τὰ κακὰ ὅτι κακὰ ἐστὶν οἱ ἡγού-

77d6 μνοι τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν; {-MEN.} Οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτό

77d7 γε.

SO: And do you think that those who believe that the bad things benefit them know that they are bad?

ME: No, that I cannot altogether believe.

{-ΣΩ.} Οὐκοῦν δηλον ὅτι οὗτοι μὲν οὐ τῶν κακῶν ἐπι-

77e1 θυμοῦσιν, οἱ ἀγνοοῦντες αὐτά, ἀλλὰ ἐκείνων ἃ ᾧοντο ἀγαθὰ

77e2 εἶναι, ἔστιν δὲ ταῦτά γε κακὰ ὥστε οἱ ἀγνοοῦντες αὐτά

77e3 καὶ οἰόμενοι ἀγαθὰ εἶναι δηλον ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν.

77e4 ἢ οὐ; {-MEN.} Κινδυνεύουσιν οὗτοί γε.

SO: It is clear then that those who do not know things to be bad do not desire what is bad, but they desire those things that they believe to be good but that are in fact bad. It follows that those who have no knowledge of these things and believe them to be good clearly desire good things. Is that not so? / ME: It is likely.

Penner and Rowe 1994, 18-19:² "Well then, it's clear that

<1*> these people don't desire *ta kaka* [i.e., the bad things], the people who don't know them [i.e. that they are *kaka*].

Instead,

<2*> they desire those things which [we agree]³ they think good.⁴

But

<3*> these very things in fact **are** *kaka*.

So, then,

<4*> those who don't know them [*to kaka*], and think that they are *agatha* [i.e., good], clearly desire *ta agatha* [i.e., the good things]."

Reshotko 2006, 23:

"Then it is clear that those who do not know things to be bad do not desire bad things. Rather, they desire the things they think good. But they are actually bad (the things they think good). So that those who do not know these things [are bad] and believe they are good clearly desire good things."

204e1-4: Ἄλλ', ἔφη, ὥσπερ ἂν εἶ τις μεταβαλὼν ἀντὶ τοῦ καλοῦ / τῶ ἀγαθῶ χρώμενος πυνθάνοιτο· Φέρε, ᾧ Σώκρατες, ἐρᾷ ὁ / ἐρῶν τῶν ἀγαθῶν· τί ἐρᾷ; / Γενέσθαι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, αὐτῶ.

Then she said, "Suppose someone changes the question, putting 'good' in place of 'beautiful,' and asks you this: 'Tell me, Socrates, a lover of good things has a desire; what does he desire?'" -- "That they become his own," I said.

2 []: their insertions, part of which are left out here; {}: my insertions. Also, the footnotes are mine.

3 Philosophical imperfect, *ibid.* n. 27.

4 Here, P&R have altered the punctuation: full stop after *einai* (e2).

77e5 {ΣΩ.} Τί δέ; οἱ τῶν κακῶν μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦντες, ὡς φῆς σύ,
77e6 ἠγούμενοι δὲ τὰ κακὰ βλάπτειν ἐκεῖνον ᾧ ἂν γίγνηται,
77e7 γιγνώσκουσιν δήπου ὅτι βλαβήσονται ὑπ' αὐτῶν; {—MEN.}
78a1 Ἄνάγκη.

SO: Well, then, those who you say desire bad things, believing that bad things harm their possessor, know that they will be harmed by them? / ME: Necessarily.

{—ΣΩ.} Ἄλλὰ τοὺς βλαπτομένους οὕτοι οὐκ οἴονται
78a2 ἀθλίους εἶναι καθ' ὅσον βλάπτονται; {—MEN.} Καὶ τοῦτο
78a3 ἀνάγκη.

SO: And do they not think that those who are harmed are miserable to the extent that they are harmed? / ME: That too is inevitable.

{—ΣΩ.} Τοὺς δὲ ἀθλίους οὐ κακοδαίμονας; {—MEN.}
78a4 Οἶμαι ἔγωγε.

SO: And those who are miserable are unhappy? / ME: I think so.

{—ΣΩ.} Ἔστιν οὖν ὅστις βούλεται ἀθλιος καὶ
78a5 κακοδαίμων εἶναι; {—MEN.} Οὐ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.

SO: Does anybody wish to be miserable and unhappy.

ME: I do not think so, Socrates

78a6 {— ΣΩ.} Οὐκ ἄρα βούλεται, ὦ Μένων, τὰ κακὰ οὐδεὶς, εἴπερ μὴ
78a7 βούλεται τοιοῦτος εἶναι. τί γὰρ ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἀθλιον εἶναι
78a8 ἢ ἐπιθυμεῖν τε τῶν κακῶν καὶ κτᾶσθαι; {—MEN.} Κινδυνεύεις
78b1 ἀληθῆ λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες; καὶ οὐδεὶς βούλεσθαι τὰ
78b2 κακά.

SO: No one then wants what is bad, Meno, unless he wants to be such. For what else is being miserable but to desire bad things and secure them?

ME: You are probably right, Socrates, and no one wants what is bad.

78b3 {ΣΩ.} Οὐκοῦν νυνδὴ ἔλεγες ὅτι ἔστιν ἡ ἀρετὴ βούλεσθαι
78b4 τε τὰγαθὰ καὶ δύνασθαι; {—MEN.} Εἶπον γάρ.

SO: Were you not saying just now that virtue is to desire good things and have the power to secure them? / ME: Yes, I was

{—ΣΩ.} Οὐκοῦν
78b5 τοῦ λεχθέντος τὸ μὲν βούλεσθαι πᾶσιν ὑπάρχει, καὶ ταύτη
78b6 γε οὐδὲν ὁ ἕτερος τοῦ ἑτέρου βελτίων; {—MEN.} Φαίνεται.

SO: The desiring part of this statement is common to everybody, and one man is no better than another in this? / ME: So it appears

78b7 {—ΣΩ.} Ἄλλὰ δῆλον ὅτι εἴπερ ἐστὶ βελτίων ἄλλος ἄλλου,
78b8 κατὰ τὸ δύνασθαι ἂν εἴη ἀμείνων. {—MEN.} Πάνυ γε.

SO: Clearly then, if one man is better than another, he must be better at securing them

ME: Quite so.

78b9 {— ΣΩ.} Τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικε, κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον ἀρετὴ,
78c1 δύναμις τοῦ πορίζεσθαι τὰγαθὰ. {—MEN.} Παντάπασι μοι
78c2 δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὕτως ἔχειν ὡς σὺ νῦν ὑπολαμβάνεις.

SO: This then is virtue according to your argument, the power of securing good things.

ME: I think, Socrates, that the case is altogether as you now understand it.

Lit. wie im Auszug zu Grg. 466A ff