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Socrates on Šešelj

Plato

Socrates: Our disagreement turns on this single point. Now what I want to know is this: Will a man who does wrong be happy if he is brought to justice and punished?

Polus: On the contrary, he will then be most miserable.

Socrates: By your account, if he is not brought to justice he will be happy?

Polus: Yes.

Socrates: On the other hand, Polus, my opinion is that the wicked man and the doer of wicked acts is miserable in any case, but more miserable if he does not pay the penalty and suffer punishment for his crimes, and less miserable if he does pay the penalty and suffer punishment in this world and the next.

Polus: What an extraordinary proposition to maintain, Socrates. [473]

Socrates: I will try nevertheless to make you also concur in this view, my friend, for I have a high regard for you. At the moment, the point on which we differ is this — see if you agree. I said earlier that doing wrong is worse than suffering wrong.

Polus: You did.

Socrates: And you that suffering wrong is worse.

Polus: Yes.

Socrates: And I said that wrongdoers are miserable, and you denied it.

Polus: I certainly did.

Socrates: That is your opinion, Polus.

Polus: And a true opinion, too.

Socrates: We shall see. You said also that wrongdoers are happy if they escape punishment.

Polus: Undoubtedly.

Socrates: But I said that they are the most miserable men, and that those who are punished are less miserable.

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Socrates: Well, will you answer my questions?

Polus: Certainly, I am eager to know what you will say.

Socrates: If you want to know, answer as if you were beginning again at the beginning. Which do you think the greater evil, Polus, doing wrong or suffering wrong?

Polus: Suffering wrong.

Socrates: And which do you think more shameful, doing wrong or suffering wrong? Answer!

Polus: Doing wrong!

Gorgias, translated by Walter Hamilton

Plato

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