

EUTHYPHRO

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Translated by Cathal Woods and Ryan Pack



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Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

2a Euthyphro (Euth): What new thing has happened, Socrates, that you have abandoned your stomping grounds in the Lyceum* and are now spending your time here, around the porch of the king*? For surely you too are not involved in some suit before the king*, as I am.

Socrates (So): The Athenians don't just call it a suit, Euthyphro, but a public indictment.*

b Euth: What do you mean? Someone has indicted you, I suppose, since I certainly wouldn't condemn you of the opposite, you indicting someone else.

So: Certainly not.

Euth: So someone else is indicting you?

So: Absolutely.

Euth: Who is this person?

So: I don't know the man very well myself, Euthyphro; I think he is a young and unknown person. Anyway, I believe they call him Meletos. He is from the Pitthean deme*, if you know of a Meletos from Pitthos with straight hair, not much of a beard, but with a hooked nose.

c Euth: I don't know him, Socrates. But what charge has he indicted you on?

So: On what charge? It's no minor charge, I think, as it's no small thing for a young man to be knowledgeable about so important an issue. For he, he says, knows how the young are corrupted and who their corruptors are. He's probably somebody wise, and having seen how I in my ignorance corrupt the people of his generation, he is coming to tattle on me to the city, as though it were his mother. And he alone seems to me to be starting out in politics correctly, because the correct way is to first pay attention to how our young people will be the best possible, just as a good farmer probably cares first for his young plants, and after this to the others as well. And so Meletos too is presumably first rooting out us who corrupt the sprouting young people, as he puts it. Then after this it's clear that, having turned his attention to the older people, he will become a source of many great goods for the city, as is likely to happen to someone who starts off in this way.

d

3a

Euth: I wish it were so, Socrates, but I'm afraid that the opposite might happen. Because it seems to me that by trying to wrong you he is starting out by recklessly harming the hearth of the city. And tell me, just what does he say you're doing to corrupt the young?

b

So: Strange things, you marvelous man, at least to hear him describe them, since he says I am a maker of gods, and because I make novel gods and do not acknowledge the old ones, he indicts me for their sake, he says.

Euth: I understand, Socrates. It's because you say the divine sign* comes to you occasionally. He has lodged this indictment because of your innovative religious ideas. And so he is obviously coming to the court intending to slander you, knowing that such things are easily misrepresented to the many. Indeed even in my case, whenever I say something in the assembly about religious matters, foretelling the future for them, they ridicule me as a madman, and yet I said nothing that was not true in what I foretold. Even so, they envy all of us who are like this. We should think nothing of them but fight them on their own ground.

c

d So: But my dear Euthyphro, being ridiculed is probably no big deal; indeed it seems to me that it doesn't matter much to the Athenians if they think someone is wise, so long as he not capable of teaching his wisdom. They become outraged with anyone they suspect of also trying to shape others in some way, whether because they are envious, as you claim, or for some other reason.

Euth: Which is why I have no great desire to have it put to the test, how they feel about me.

e So: It's probably because you seem to rarely make yourself available and appear unwilling to teach your wisdom, whereas I fear that, because of my love of people, I strike them as someone who is bursting to talk to everybody, and not just without demanding payment, but would even be glad to compensate anyone who cared to listen to me. So as I was saying, if they intend to laugh at me, as you said happened to you, there would be nothing unpleasant about spending time in court playing around and laughing. But if they are going to be serious, it's unclear at present how things will turn out, except to you prophets.

Euth: Well, it will probably be nothing, Socrates, and you will fight your case satisfactorily, as I think I will fight mine, too.

So: What exactly is your suit, Euthyphro? Are you defending or prosecuting it?

Euth: I am prosecuting.

So: Whom?

4a Euth: A man whom by pursuing I will again appear crazy.

So: But why? You're pursuing someone who flies?

Euth: He is long way from flying. As a matter of fact he happens to be well advanced in years.

So: Who is he?

Euth: My father.

So: Your father, you fantastic fellow?!

Euth: Absolutely.

So: But what is the charge, and what are the circumstances?

Euth: Murder, Socrates.

b So: Heracles! I think most people wouldn't know how to act properly in such a case, since I don't think that just anyone could take care of this correctly, but only someone, I suspect, who has progressed a long way in wisdom.

Euth: By Zeus, a long way indeed, Socrates.

So: Surely the person killed by your father is one of your relatives? It must be, since you would not prosecute him for murder on behalf of a stranger.

c Euth: It's ridiculous, Socrates, that you think that it makes a difference whether the man killed is a stranger or a relative, and don't think it is necessary to watch only for this, whether the killer killed legally or not, and if it was legal, to let him go, and if not, to prosecute him, if the killer, that is, shares one's hearth and eats at the same table. Because the pollution is the same if you are aware that you share the guilt and do not both purify yourself and prosecute him in law.

The victim, as a matter of fact, was a certain laborer of mine, and

d when we were farming in Naxos he was employed by us there. Drunk and having been provoked by another one of our household, he slit this man's throat. So my father bound his feet and hands, threw him into some ditch and sent a man here to inquire of the interpreter of religious law about what should be done. But during that time he paid no attention to the bound man and neglected him as a murderer and thought nothing of it if he died too, which is in fact what happened, since he died of hunger and cold and his bonds before the messenger returned from the interpreter.

e That's why both my father and my other relatives are angry, because I am prosecuting my father on behalf of a murderer, when he didn't kill him, they say, or if he did in fact kill him, well, since the man he killed was a murderer, one should not be concerned about such people—because, they say, it's unholy for a son to prosecute his father for murder, not really knowing, Socrates, how the religious law stands with respect to holiness and unholiness.

So: But by Zeus, do you, Euthyphro, think you have such accurate knowledge about how the religious laws stand, about both piety and impiety, that with these things having taken place in the way you describe, you are not afraid that, prosecuting your father, you might be committing another impiety in doing so?

5a Euth: I would be of no use, Socrates, and neither would Euthyphro be better than the majority of men, if I did not have accurate knowledge of all such matters.

b So: Then it would be excellent for me to become a student of yours, marvelous Euthyphro, and prior to this dispute with Meletos I will challenge him in this very way, saying that while even in the past I used to make knowledge of religious law my top priority, now, because he says I err by judging rashly and innovating with respect to the religious laws, I have also become your student. "And," I would say, "if you agree, Meletos, that Euthyphro is wise in such matters, then believe that I too worship properly and do not charge me. If not, see about bringing a charge against him, my teacher, rather than me, since he corrupts the elderly—me and his father—by teaching me and by rebuking and chastising him." And if he is not convinced by me and doesn't withdraw the charge or indict you in my place, shouldn't I say the exact same thing in court as I said in challenging him?

c Euth: Yes by Zeus, Socrates. If he tried to indict me I think I would uncover in what way he is unsound and we would have found that the discussion in court would have been about him long before it was about me.

d So: And indeed, my dear Euthyphro, I recognize this and want to become a student of yours, seeing how practically everyone else and Meletos himself pretends not to notice you, but he sees through me so clearly and easily that he indicts me for impiety. So now, by Zeus, explain to me what you were just now affirming to know clearly: what sort of thing do you say holiness is, and unholiness, with respect to both murder and everything else? Or isn't the pious the same as itself in every action, and the impious in turn is the complete opposite of the pious but the same as itself, and everything that in fact turns out to be impious has a single

form with respect to its impiousness?

Euth: It certainly is, Socrates.

So: So tell me, what do you say the pious is, and what is the impious?

e Euth: Well now, I claim that the pious is what I am doing now, prosecuting someone who is guilty of wrongdoing, either of murder or temple robbery or anything else of the sort, whether it happens to be one's
 6a father or mother or whoever else, and the impious is failing to prosecute. For observe, Socrates, how great a proof I will give you that this is how the law stands, one I have already given to others as well, which shows such actions to be correct—not yielding to impious people, that is, no matter who they happen to be. Because these very people also happen to worship Zeus as the best and most just of the gods, and agree that he put his own father in bonds because he unjustly swallowed his sons, and the father too castrated his own father for other similar reasons.* Yet they are sore at me because I am prosecuting my father for his injustice. And so they say opposite things about the gods and me.

b So: Maybe this, Euthyphro, is why I am being prosecuted for this crime, that whenever someone says such things about the gods, for some reason I find them hard to accept? On account of which, I suppose, someone will claim I misbehave. So now if you also, with your expertise in such matters, share these beliefs, it's surely necessary, I suppose, that we too must agree, for else what will we say, those of us, that is, who admit openly that we know nothing about these matters? But by the god of friendship tell me, do you truly believe these things happened like this?

Euth: These and still more amazing things, Socrates, that the many are unaware of.

c So: And do you believe there is really a war amongst the gods, with terrible feuds, even, and battles and many other such things, such as are recounted by the poets and the holy artists, and that have been elaborately decorated for us on other sacred objects and especially the robe covered with such designs which is brought up to the acropolis at the great Panathenaea?* Are we to say that these things are true, Euthyphro?

Euth: Not only these, Socrates, but as I said just now, I could describe many other things about the divine laws to you in addition, if you want, which I am sure you will be astounded to hear.

d So: I wouldn't be surprised. But you can describe these to me at leisure some other time. For the time being, however, try to describe more clearly what I asked you just now, since previously, my friend, you did not teach me well enough when I asked what the pious was but you told me that what you're doing is something pious, prosecuting your father for murder.

Euth: And what's more, I spoke the truth, Socrates.

So: Perhaps. But in fact, Euthyphro, you say there are many other pious things.

Euth: Indeed there are.

So: So remember that I did not request this from you, to teach me one or two of the many pious things, but to teach me the form itself by which everything pious is pious? For you said that it's by one form that

- e impious things are somehow impious and pious things pious. Or don't you remember?
 Euth: I certainly do.
 So: So then tell me whatever this form itself is, so that, by looking at it and using it as a paradigm, I can declare what you or anyone else might do of that kind to be pious, and if it is not of that kind, that it is not.
 Euth: Well if that's what you want, Socrates, that's what I'll tell you.
 So: That's exactly what I want.
 Euth: Well, what is beloved by the gods is pious, and what is not
- 7a beloved by them is impious.
 So: Excellent, Euthyphro! With this you have answered in the way I was looking for you to answer. Whether or not it's true, that I don't quite know, but it's clear that you will teach me how what you say is true.
 Euth: Absolutely.
 So: Come then, let's look at what we said. An action or a person that is beloved by the gods is pious, while an action or person that is despised by the gods is impious. They are not the same, but complete opposites, the pious and impious. Isn't that so?
 Euth: Indeed it is.
 So: And this seems right?
- b Euth: I think so, Socrates.
 So: But wasn't it also said that that gods are at odds with each other and disagree with one another and that there are feuds among them?
 Euth: Yes, it was.
 So: Disagreement about *what* is the cause of the hatred and anger, my good man? Let's look at it this way. If we disagree, you and I, about quantity, over which of two groups is greater, would our disagreement over this make us enemies and angry with each other, or wouldn't we
- c quickly resolve the issue by resorting to counting?
 Euth: Certainly.
 So: And again if we disagreed about bigger and smaller, we would quickly put an end to the disagreement by resorting to measurement?
 Euth: That's right.
 So: And we would use weighing, I presume, to reach a decision about heavier and lighter?
 Euth: How else?
- d So: Then what topic, exactly, would divide us and what decision would we be unable to reach such that we would be enemies and angry with one another? Perhaps you don't have an answer at hand, so see while I'm talking whether it's the just and the unjust, and the noble and shameful, and the good and the bad. Isn't it these things that divide us and about which we're not able to come to a satisfactory decision and so become enemies of one another, whenever that happens, whether it's me and you, or any other men?
 Euth: It is indeed this disagreement, Socrates, and over these things.
 So: What about the gods, Euthyphro? If they indeed disagree over something, don't they disagree over these very things?
 Euth: It's undoubtedly necessary.
- e So: Then some of the gods think different things to be just,

according to you, worthy Euthyphro, and noble and shameful and good and bad, since they surely wouldn't be at odds with one another unless they were disagreeing about these things. Right?

Euth: You're right.

So: And so what each group thinks is noble and good and just, they also love these things, and they hate the things that are the opposites of these?

Euth: Certainly.

8a So: Then according to you some of them think that these things are just, while others think they are unjust, the things that, because there's a dispute, they are at odds about and are at war over. Isn't this so?

Euth: It is.

So: The same things, it seems, are both hated by the gods and loved, and so would be both despised and beloved by them?

Euth: It seems so.

So: And the same things would be both pious and impious, Euthyphro, according to this argument?

Euth: I'm afraid so.

b So: So you haven't answered what I was asking, you marvelous man. Because I didn't ask you for what is both pious and impious at once, and as it appears, both beloved and despised by the gods. As a result, Euthyphro, it wouldn't be surprising if in doing what you're doing now—punishing your father—you were doing something beloved by Zeus but despised by Kronos and Ouranos, and while it is dear to Hephaestus, it is despised by Hera, and if any other god disagrees with another on the subject, your action will appear the same way to them, too.

Euth: But I believe, Socrates, that on this matter at least none of the gods will disagree with any other, that any man who has killed another person unjustly need not pay the penalty.

c So: What's that? Haven't you ever heard a human being arguing that someone who killed unjustly or did something else unjustly should not pay the penalty?

Euth: There's no end to these arguments, both outside and inside the courts, since people commit so many injustices and do and say anything to escape the punishment.

So: Do they actually agree that they are guilty, Euthyphro, and despite agreeing they nonetheless say that they shouldn't pay the penalty?

Euth: They don't agree on that at all.

d So: So they don't do or say *everything*, since, I think, they don't dare to make this claim nor do they argue that if they in fact are guilty they should *not* pay the penalty, but I think they claim that they're not guilty. Right?

Euth: That's true.

So: So they don't argue, at least, that the guilty person shouldn't pay the penalty, but perhaps they argue about who the guilty party is and what he did and when.

Euth: That's true.

So: Doesn't the very same thing happen to the gods, too, if indeed, as you said, they are at odds about just and unjust things, some saying that

e a god commits an injustice against another one, while others deny it? But absolutely no one at all, you marvelous man, either god or human, dares to say that the guilty person need not pay the penalty.

Euth: Yes. What you say is true, Socrates, for the most part.

So: But I think that those who dispute, Euthyphro, both men and gods, if the gods actually dispute, argue over the particulars of what was done. Differing over a certain action, some say that it was done justly, others that it was done unjustly. Isn't that so?

Euth: Certainly.

9a So: Come now, my dear Euthyphro. So that I can become wiser, teach me too what evidence you have that all the gods think the man was killed unjustly, the one who committed murder while he was working for you, and was bound by the master of the man he killed, and died from his bonds before the servant could learn from the interpreter what ought to be done in his case, and is the sort of person on whose behalf it is proper for a son to prosecute his father and make an allegation of murder. Come, try to give me a clear indication of how in this case more than all others the gods think that this action is proper. If you could point this out to me satisfactorily I would never stop praising you for your wisdom.

b Euth: But this is probably quite a task, Socrates, though I could show it to you very clearly, even so.

So: I understand. It's because you think I'm a slower learner than the judges, since you could make it clear to *them* in what way these actions are unjust and how the gods all hate such things.

Euth: Very clear indeed, Socrates, if only they would listen to what I have to say.

c So: Of course they'll listen, so long as they think you speak well. While you were speaking the following occurred to me and I thought to myself, "Even if Euthyphro convincingly shows me that all the gods think this kind of death is unjust, what at all will I have learned from Euthyphro about what the pious and the impious are? Because while this particular deed might be despised by the gods, as is likely, it was already apparent, just a moment ago, that the pious and impious aren't defined this way, since we saw that what is despised by the gods is also beloved by them." So I release you from this task, Euthyphro. If you want, let us allow that all the gods think this is unjust and that all of them despise it. But this current correction to the definition—that what all the gods despise is impious while what they love is pious, and what some love and some hate is neither or both—do you want us to now define the pious and the impious in this way?

d Euth: Well, what is stopping us, Socrates?

So: For my part nothing, Euthyphro, but you look out for yourself, whether you will teach me what you promised as easily as possible by adopting this definition.

e Euth: I for my part affirm the claim that the pious is what all the gods love, and the opposite, what all the gods hate, is impious.

So: Let's see again, Euthyphro, whether it's well stated. Or will we be content and simply accept our own definition or the definition of others, agreeing that it is right just because somebody says it is. Or must we

examine what the speaker is saying?

Euth: We must examine it. But I'm quite confident that what we have now is well put.

10a So: We'll soon know better, my good man. Think about this: Is the pious loved by the gods because it's pious, or it is pious because it is loved?

Euth: I don't know what you mean, Socrates.

So: I'll try to express myself more clearly. We speak of something being carried and carrying, and being led and leading, and being seen and seeing, and so you understand that all of these are different from one another and in what way they are different?

Euth: I think I understand.

So: So there's a thing loved and different from this there's the thing that loves?

Euth: How could there not be?

b So: Then tell me whether what is carried is a carried thing because it is carried, or because of something else?

Euth: No; it's because of this.

So: And clearly what is led because it is led, and what is seen because it is seen?

Euth: Absolutely.

So: So it is not that, because it is something seen, it is seen, but the opposite, that because it is seen it is something seen. And it is not because it is something led that it is led, but because it is led it is something led. And it is not because it is something carried that it is carried, but because it is carried, it is something carried. Is it clear, what I'm trying to say, Euthyphro? I mean this: that if something becomes or is affected by something, it's not because it is a thing coming to be that it comes to be, but because it comes to be it is a thing coming into being. Nor is it affected by something because it is a thing that is affected, but because it is affected, it is a thing that is being affected. Or don't you agree?

c

Euth: I do

So: And is a loved thing either a thing that comes to be or is affected by something?

Euth: Certainly.

So: And does the same apply to this as the previous ones: it is not because it is a loved thing that it is loved by those who love it, but it is a loved thing because it is loved?

Euth: Necessarily

d

So: So what do we say about the pious, Euthyphro? Precisely that is it loved by all the gods, according to your statement?

Euth: Yes.

So: Is it because of this that it is pious, or because of something else?

Euth: No, it's because of this.

So: Isn't it because it is pious that it is loved, and it's not because it is loved that it is pious?

Euth: It seems so.

So: It must be that it's because it is loved by the gods that it is a loved thing and beloved by the gods?

Euth: How could it not?

So: So the beloved is not pious, Euthyphro, nor is the pious beloved by the gods, as you claim, but the one is different from the other.

e Euth: How so, Socrates?

So: Because we agree that the pious is loved because of this, that is, because it's pious, and we don't agree that it is pious because it is loved. Right?

Euth: Yes.

So: The beloved, on the other hand, because it is loved by gods, is beloved due to this very act of being loved, and it is not because it is beloved that it is being loved?

Euth: That's true.

11a So: But if the beloved and the pious were in fact the same, my dear Euthyphro, then, if the pious were loved because of being the pious, then the beloved would be loved because of being the beloved, and again, if the beloved was beloved because of being loved by gods, the pious would also be pious by being loved. But as it is, you see that the two are opposites and are completely different from one another, since the one is lovable because it is loved, while the other is loved because it is lovable.

b So it's likely, Euthyphro, that when you were asked what in the world the pious is, you did not want to reveal its nature to me, but wanted to tell me some one of its qualities—that the pious has this quality: it is loved by all the gods—but as for what it *is*, you did not say at all. So if I am dear to you, don't keep me in the dark but tell me again from the beginning what in the world the pious is. And we won't differ over whether it is loved by the gods or whatever else happens to it, but tell me without delay, what the pious is, and the impious?

Euth: But Socrates I have no way of telling you what I'm thinking, because somehow whatever I put forward for us always wanders off and doesn't want to stay where we put it.

c So: The things you say, Euthyphro, seem to belong to my ancestor Dedalos.* And if I were saying them and putting them forward, perhaps you would be joking about how my works made of words run away even on me because he's kin and don't want to stay wherever a person might put them. But at present these propositions are yours, and so we have to find some other joke, since they don't want to stay put for you, as even you yourself admit.

d Euth: It seems to me that pretty much the same joke applies to what was said, Socrates, since I am not the inspiration for their wandering off and their refusal to stay in the same place, but you seem to me to be the Dedalos, since they would stay in place just fine for me, at least.

e So: It's likely, my friend, that I've become more skilled than him in the craft, to the extent that while he could only make his own works move, I can do so to others' works as well as my own. And to my mind this is the most exquisite thing about my skill, that I am unintentionally clever, since I wanted the words to stay put for me and to be fixed motionless more than to have the money of Tantalos and the skill of Dedalos combined. But enough of this; I think you are spoiled. I am eager for you to show me how you will educate me about the pious. So don't give up the task. See

whether you believe that everything pious is necessarily just.

Euth: I do.

12a So: And is everything just pious? Or is every pious thing just but not every just thing is pious, but some just things are pious, and some are something else again?

Euth: I can't keep up with what you're saying, Socrates.

So: And yet you are younger than me by at least as much as you are wiser than me! But, as I say, you are spoiled by your abundance of wisdom. Put your back into it, you blessed man, since what I'm saying is not difficult to get your head around. Surely I mean the opposite of what the poet meant when he wrote: *

Zeus who created it and who produced all of these

b You do not want to revile; for where there is fear there is also shame. I disagree with this statement of the poet. Shall I tell you how?

Euth: Yes indeed.

So: I don't think that "where there is fear there is also shame" since I think many people who fear sickness, poverty and many other things feel fear, but they do not feel shame at these things they fear. Don't you think so, too?

Euth: Certainly.

c So: Where there is shame, though, there is also fear, for is there anyone who feels shame and humiliation at something who doesn't also feel fear and dread a reputation for cowardice?

Euth: He does indeed dread it.

So: So it's not right to claim that "where there is fear there is also shame" but where there is shame there is also fear, for shame is not in fact everywhere fear is. I think fear covers more than shame. Shame is a part of fear, just as oddness is a part of number, so that it's not the case that where there is number there is also oddness, but where there is oddness, there is also number. Do you follow now, at least?

Euth: I certainly do.

d So: This is the kind of thing I was talking about earlier when I was questioning you: where there is justice, is there also piety? Or is it that where there is piety, there is also justice, but piety is not everywhere justice is, since piety is a part of justice? Do you think we should speak in this way or in some other?

Euth: No, in this way. I think you're speaking properly.

So: Then see what follows this: if the pious is a part of the just, we must, it seems, discover what part of the just the pious might be. If you now asked me something about what we were discussing just now, such as what part of number the even is, and what number it happens to be, I would say that it would be the number that can be divided into two equal and not unequal parts.* Doesn't it seem so to you?

Euth: It does.

e So: So try to teach me in this way, Euthyphro, what sort of part of the just piety is, so that we can also tell Meletos not to do us wrong and charge me with impiety, since I have already learned enough from you about what is holy and what is pious and what is not.

Euth: It seems to me now, Socrates, that holiness and piety is the

part of justice concerned with attending to the gods, while the remaining part of justice is concerned with attending to human beings.

13a So: I think you put that well, Euthyphro. But I still need just one small thing: I don't know quite what you mean by "attending". Surely you don't mean that attending to the gods is like the other kinds of attending even though we do say so, such as when we say that not everybody knows how to attend to a horse, except the horse-trainer. Right?

Euth: Certainly.

So: Horse-training is attending to horses?

Euth: Yes.

So: And no one but the dog-trainer knows how to attend to dogs?

Euth: Right.

So: And dog-training is attending to dogs?

b Euth: Yes.

So: And cattle-herding is of cattle?

Euth: Absolutely.

So: Naturally, then, piety and holiness are of the gods, Euthyphro? That's what you mean?

Euth: I do.

So: Does all attending bring about the same effect? Something of the following sort, the good and benefit of what is attended to, in just the way you see that horses being attended to by horse-trainers are benefited and become better? Or don't you think they are?

Euth: They are.

c So: And dogs by the dog-trainer somehow, and cattle by the cattle-herder, and all the others similarly? Or do you think the attending is aimed at harming what is attended to?

Euth: By Zeus, I do not.

So: But at benefiting them?

Euth: How could it not be?

So: And since piousness is attending to the gods, does it benefit the gods and make the gods better? Do you agree to this, that whenever one does something pious it results in some improvement of the gods?

Euth: By Zeus, no, I don't.

d So: Nor did I think that that's what you meant, Euthyphro—far from it, in fact—and so that's why I was asking what in the world you meant by "attending to the gods", because I didn't think you mean this kind of thing.

Euth: And you're right, Socrates. Because I mean no such thing.

So: Alright then. But what kind of attending to the gods would piousness be, then?

Euth: The kind, Socrates, when slaves attend to their masters.

So: I understand. It would be a kind of service to gods, it seems .

Euth: Certainly.

So: Can you tell me about service to doctors, what end result is it a service aimed at? Don't you think it's at health?

Euth: I do.

e So: And what about service to shipbuilders? What end result is it a service aimed at?

Euth: Clearly it's aimed at sailing, Socrates.

So: And service to house-builders, I suppose, is aimed at houses?

Euth: Yes.

So: Tell me then, best of men, what end result is service to the gods a service aimed at? It's obvious that you know, since you claim to have the finest religious knowledge, at least, of any human.

Euth: And as a matter of fact, Socrates, I speak the truth.

So: So tell me, by Zeus, what in the world is that magnificent task which the gods accomplish by using us as servants?

Euth: Many fine tasks, Socrates.

14a So: Well, and so do the generals, my friend. But nevertheless one could easily say what their key purpose is, that they achieve victory in war. Or not?

Euth: How else could it be?

So: And I think the farmers accomplish many fine tasks. And yet their key purpose is nourishment from the soil.

Euth: Very much so.

So: So what, then, about the many fine things that the gods accomplish? What is the key purpose of their labor?

b Euth: I said a little earlier, Socrates, that it is a great task to learn exactly how all these things are. But I will put it for you generally: if a man knows how to speak and act pleasingly to the gods in his prayers and sacrifices, those are pious, and such things preserve both his own home and the common good of the city. But the opposites of these pleasing things are unholy, which obviously overturn and destroy everything.

c So: If you were willing, Euthyphro, you could have told me the heart of what I was asking much more briefly. But in fact you are not eager to teach me, that much is clear. Since now when you were just about to do so, you turned away. If you had answered, I would already have gotten a satisfactory understanding of piety from you. But for the present, the lover must follow his beloved wherever he might lead. So what do say the pious and piety are, again? Don't you say it's a certain kind of knowledge, of how to sacrifice and pray?

Euth: I do.

So: And sacrificing is giving to the gods, while praying is making a request of the gods?

Euth: Very much so, Socrates.

d So: Based on this, piety would be knowledge of making requests and giving things to the gods?

Euth: You have understood my meaning very well, Socrates.

So: It's because I am eager for your wisdom, my friend, and pay close attention to it, so that nothing you might say falls to the ground. But tell me, what is this service to the gods? You say it is making requests of them and giving to them?

Euth: I do.

So: And proper requests would be requests for what we need from them, asking them for these things?

Euth: What else?

e So: And again, giving properly would be giving what they happen

to need from us, to give these things to them in return? Since to give a gift by giving someone what he has no need of would not be too skillful, I suppose.

Euth: That's true, Socrates.

So: So pioussness for gods and humans, Euthyphro, would be some skill of trading with one another?

Euth: If naming it that way is sweeter for you, call it "trading".

15a So: As far as I'm concerned, nothing is sweeter unless it is true. Tell me, how do the gods benefit from the gifts they receive from us? What they give us is clear to everyone, since every good we have was given by them. But what they receive from us, what good is it? Or do we fare so much better than them in the trade that we get everything that's good from them, while they get nothing from us?

Euth: But do you think, Socrates, that they gods are benefited by what they receive from us?

So: Well then what in the world would they be, Euthyphro, these gifts from us to the gods?

Euth: What else, do you think, but honor and admiration and, as I said just now, gratitude?

b So: So being shown gratitude is what's pious, Euthyphro, but it is neither beneficial to the gods nor dear to them?

Euth: I think it is dear to them above everything else.

So: So the pious is once again, it seems, what is dear to gods.

Euth: Very much so.

c So: Are you at all surprised, when you say such things, that your words seem not to stand still but to move around? And you accuse me of making them move around like a Dedalus when you yourself are much more skilled than Dedalus, even making things go around in circles? Or don't you see that our discussion has gone around and arrived back at the same place? You remember, no doubt, that previously the pious and the beloved by the gods seemed to us not to be the same but different from one another. Or don't you remember?

Euth: I certainly do.

So: Well, don't you realize now that you're saying that what is dear to the gods is pious? But is this anything other than what is beloved by the gods? Or not?

Euth: It certainly is.

So: So either what we decided then was wrong, or, if we were right then, we are wrong to think it now.

Euth: So it seems.

d So: We must begin again from the beginning to examine what the pious is, since as far as I am concerned, I will not give up until I understand it. Do not scorn me, but applying your mind in every way, tell me the truth, now more than ever. Because you know it if anybody does and, like Proteus,* you cannot be released until you tell me, because unless you knew clearly about the pious and impious there is no way you would ever have tried to pursue your aging father for murder on behalf of a hired laborer, but instead you would have been afraid before the gods, and ashamed before men, to run the risk of conducting this matter improperly.

e But as it is, I am sure that you think that you have clear knowledge of the pious and the impious. So tell me, great Euthyphro, and do not conceal what you think it is.

Euth: Well, some other time, then, Socrates, because I'm in a hurry to get somewhere and it's time for me to go.

16a So: What a thing to do, my friend! By leaving, you have cast me down from a great hope I had, that I would learn from you what is pious and what is not, and would free myself from Meletos' charge, by showing him that, thanks to Euthyphro, I had already become wise in religious matters and that I would no longer speak carelessly and innovate about these things due to ignorance, and in particular that I would live better for the rest of my life.

NOTES

A star (*) in the text indicates a note.

- 2a *Lyceum*. A gymnasium outside the walls of Athens.
- 2a *the porch of the king*. The "porch" is a covered walkway in the Athenian *agora* (marketplace or forum. See the "Stoa Basileios" on the [map](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Agora_of_Athens) at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Agora_of_Athens.)
- 2a *before the king*. The 'king' was one of nine *archons* or magistrates. At this stage of the proceedings, accusations would be lodged and testimony recorded from those involved and from witnesses. The king archon was in charge of religious matters. Socrates is there because he has been charged with a religious crime—of not acknowledging the gods of the city; Euthyphro is there because he believes that his father, as a murderer, is polluting the religious spaces of the city, which then needs to be purified. (See 4c and [Athenian Constitution 57](#). (On-line at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/medieval/athe6.htm#57>.)
- 2a *a public indictment*. It was up to individuals (in Socrates' case, Meletos, along with Anytos and Lycon) to bring cases on behalf of the city.
- 2b *deme*. An administrative region of Attica.
- 3b *divine sign*. See *Socrates' Defense* 31b and 41a-c.
- 6a *Zeus ... his father ... his father ...*. For the stories of Zeus, Kronos and Ouranos, see Hesiod's *Theogony* lines 154-182 and 453-506. (On-line at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hesiod/theogony.htm>)
- 6c *robe ... great Panathanaea?* The Panathanaea was a celebration of Athena's, birthday, held annually, with a larger ("great") celebration every four years. A new robe would be presented to the statue of the goddess Athena.
- 11c *Dedalos*. The statues of the mythical Dedalos were said to be so life-like that they appeared to move. Dedalos is most famous for making wings for himself and his son Icaros to use to escape from Crete.
- 12a-b The quote is from Stanislos' *Cypria*, a collection of tales describing the events prior to where the *Iliad* begins. (Not available on-line.)
- 12d *divided into two equal and not unequal parts*. Literally "isosceles and not scalene". Presumably because isosceles triangles have two equal legs.
- 15d *Proteus*. A mythical sea god who could change shape. Menelaus had to hold on to Proteus as he changed shape in order to get him to prophesy. (See [Odyssey 4.398-463](#). For an on-line version, see [http://www.ancientclassics.com/odyssey/odyssey4.htm](#).)