

## PD04

"Pain does not last continuously in the flesh, but the acutest pain is there for a very short time, and even that which just exceeds the pleasure in the flesh does not continue for many days at once. But chronic illnesses permit a predominance of pleasure over pain in the flesh." Epicurus PD4 (Bailey)

"Pain does not abide continuously in the flesh, but in its extremity it is present only a very short time. That pain which only just exceeds the pleasure in the flesh, does not last many days. But long diseases have in them more that is pleasant than painful to the flesh." Yonge (1853)

"Continuous pain does not last long in the flesh, and pain, if extreme, is present a very short time, and even that degree of pain which barely outweighs pleasure in the flesh does not occur for many days together. Illnesses of long duration even permit of an excess of pleasure over pain in the flesh." Hicks (1910)

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"Pain does not prevail continuously in the flesh but the peak of it is present for the briefest interval, and the pain that barely exceeds the pleasure in the flesh is not with us many days, while protracted illnesses have an excess of pleasure over pain in the flesh." De Witt, Epicurus and His Philosophy 244 (1954)

"Continuous bodily suffering does not last long. Intense pain is very brief, and even pain that barely outweighs physical pleasure does not last many days. Long illnesses permit physical pleasures that are greater than the pain." Geer (1964)

"Pain does not last continuously in the flesh: when acute it is there for a very short time, while the pain which just exceeds the pleasure in the flesh does not persist for many days; and chronic illnesses contain an excess of pleasure in the flesh over pain." Long, The Hellenistic Philosophers 115 (1987)

"Pain does not dwell continuously in the flesh. Extreme pain is present but a very brief time, and that which barely exceeds bodily pleasure continues no more than a few days. But chronic illness allows greater pleasure than pain in the flesh." O'Connor (1993)

"The feeling of pain does not linger continuously in the flesh; rather, the sharpest is present for the shortest time, while what merely exceeds the feeling of pleasure in the flesh lasts only a few days. And diseases which last a long time involve feelings of pleasure which exceed feelings of pain." Inwood & Gerson (1994)

"Continuous physical pain does not last long. Instead, extreme pain lasts only a very short time, and even less-extreme pain does not last for many days at once. Even protracted diseases allow periods of physical comfort that exceed feelings of pain." Anderson (2004)

"What produces pain does not remain constantly in the body over a long period of time; it is rather that the maximal pain persists for the least span of time, and even that bodily pain which barely exceeds pleasure does not continue to happen for many days <in a row.> And, indeed, chronic illnesses themselves have an excess of what produces bodily pleasure over what is productive of pain." Makridis (2005)

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period, and pains that barely exceed the state of bodily pleasure do not continue for many days. On the other hand, protracted illnesses show a balance of bodily pleasure over pain.” Strodach (2012)

“Pain does not last long in the flesh; in fact, extreme pain is present for the briefest time, while that which hardly outweighs pleasure does not last for many days. And illnesses that are prolonged may even afford the flesh more pleasure than pain.” Mensch (2018)

“Pain does not continue for long in the flesh. Rather, the most intense pain lasts the shortest time; any pain that exceeds pleasant feeling in the flesh does not last many days; and lengthy infirmities have more pleasant feeling in the flesh than pain.” White (2021)

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### CONTINUOUS PAIN IMPOSSIBLE

**Having laid down the two principles that pleasure and pain are true opposites and that continuous pleasure is a possibility, Epicurus was forced by a necessity of thought into positing that continuous pain is impossible. Authorized Doctrine 4: "Pain does not prevail continuously in the flesh but the peak of it is present for the briefest interval, and the pain that barely exceeds the pleasure in the flesh is not with us many days, while protracted illnesses have an excess of pleasure over pain in the flesh." This is among the more unfortunate doctrines of Epicurus and rightly incurred the sharpest ridicule. It reveals more faith in doctrine and more determination to live by it and to maintain control of experience than is consistent with medical knowledge. He seems to have been reasoning from his own malady, stone in the kidney, which is accompanied by spasms of extreme agony separated by long intervals of immunity.**

**He had taken this stand, however, and continued to maintain it. There is another saying extant which is supplementary to the former: "Acute pains quickly result in death; protracted pains are not marked by acuteness." <sup>63</sup> In protracted suffering the principle of the subtraction of pain from pleasure holds good. Upon this notion depends the so-called Calculus of Pleasure. This title is neither ancient nor precise; it is no more a calculus of pleasure than of pain and it might more rightly be called a calculus of advantage. The supporting text runs as follows: "The right way to judge all these pleasures and pains is by measuring**

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comment is among  
ble to find Platonic  
doctrine also being

For Discussion of this topic see: [Doctrine 4 - Pain does not last continuously in the flesh...](#)