Have you never perceived, said I, that our soul is immortal and never perishes?
And he, looking me full in the face in amazement, said, No, by Zeus, not I, but are you able to declare this?
I certainly ought to be, said I, and I think you too can, for it is nothing hard.
It is for me, he said, and I would gladly hear from you this thing that is not hard.
Listen, said I.
Just speak on, he replied.
You speak of good and evil, do you not?
[Glaucon:] I do.  [Socrates:] Is your notion of them the same as mine?  [Glaucon:] What is it?
That which destroys and corrupts in every case is the evil; that which preserves and benefits is the good.
Yes, I think so, he said.
How about this?  Do you say that there is for everything its special good and evil, as for example for the
eyes ophthalmia, for the entire body disease, for grain mildew, rotting for wood, rust for bronze and iron, and,
as I say, for practically everything its congenital evil and disease?
I do, he said.
Then when one of these evils comes to anything does it not make the thing to which it attaches itself bad,
and finally disintegrate and destroy it?
Of course.
Then the congenital evil of each thing and its own vice destroys it, or if that is not going to destroy it,
nothing else remains that could, for obviously the good will never destroy anything, nor yet again will that which
is neutral and neither good nor evil.
How could it?  he said.
If, then, we discover anything that has an evil which vitiates it, yet is not able to dissolve and destroy it,
shall we not thereupon know that of a thing so constituted there can be no destruction?
That seems likely, he said.
Well, then, said I, has not the soul something that makes it evil?
Indeed it has, he said, all the things that we were just now enumerating, injustice and licentiousness and
cowardice and ignorance.
Does any one of these things dissolve and destroy it?  And reflect, lest we be misled by supposing that
when an unjust and foolish man is taken in his injustice he is then destroyed by the injustice, which is the vice of
soul.  But conceive it thus.  Just as the vice of body which is disease wastes and destroys it so that it no longer is a
body at all, in like manner in all the examples of which we spoke it is the specific evil which, by attaching itself to
the thing and dwelling in it with power to corrupt, reduces it to nonentity.  Is not that so?
Yes.
Come, then, and consider the soul in the same way.  Do injustice and other wickedness dwelling in it, by
their indwelling and attachment to it, corrupt and wither it till they bring it to death and separate it from the
body?
They certainly do not do that, he said.
But surely, said I, it is unreasonable to suppose that the vice of something else destroys a thing while its
own does not.
Yes, unreasonable.
For observe, Glaucon, said I, that we do not think it proper to say of the body either that it is destroyed
by the badness of foods themselves, whether it be staleness or rottenness or whatever it is, but when the badness
of the foods themselves engenders in the body the defect of body, then we shall say that it is destroyed owing to
these foods, but by its own vice, which is disease.  But the body being one thing and the foods something else, we
shall never expect the body to be destroyed by their badness, that is by an alien evil that has not produced in it
the evil that belongs to it by nature.
You are entirely right, he replied.
On the same principle, said I, if the badness of the body does not produce in the soul the soul’s badness
we shall never expect the soul to be destroyed by an alien evil apart from its own defect – one thing, that is, by
the evil of another.

That is reasonable, he said.

Either, then, we must refute this and show that we are mistaken, or, so long as it remains unrefuted, we
must never say that by fever or any other disease, or yet by the knife at the throat or the chopping to bits of the
entire body, there is any more likelihood of the soul perishing because of these things, until it is proved that
owing to these affections of the body the soul itself becomes more unjust and unholy. But when an evil of
something else occurs in a different thing and the evil that belongs to the thing is not engendered in it, we must
not suffer it to be said that the soul or anything else is in this way destroyed.

But you may be sure, he said, that nobody will ever prove this, that the souls of the dying are made more
unjust by death.

But if anyone, said I, dares to come to grips with the argument and say, in order to avoid being forced to
admit the soul’s immortality, that a dying man does become more wicked and unjust, we will postulate that, if
what he says is true, injustice must be fatal to its possessor as if it were a disease, and that those who catch it die
because it kills them by its own inherent nature, those who have most of it quickest, and those who have less
more slowly, and not, as now in fact happens, that the unjust die owing to this but by the action of others who
inflict the penalty.

Nay, by Zeus, he said, injustice will not appear a very terrible thing after all if it is going to be fatal to its
possessor, for that would be a release from all troubles. But I rather think it will prove to be quite the contrary,
something that kills others when it can, but renders its possessor very lively indeed, and not only lively but
wakeful, so far, I ween, does it dwell from deadliness.

You say well, I replied, for when the natural vice and the evil proper to it cannot kill and destroy the
soul, still less will the evil appointed for the destruction of another thing destroy the soul or anything else, except
that for which it is appointed.

Still less indeed, he said, in all probability.

Then since it is not destroyed by any evil whatever, either its own or alien, it is evident that it must
necessarily exist always, and that if it always exists it is immortal.

Necessarily, he said.