Chapter I ("Of the Principle of Utility").

1. **Mankind governed by pain and pleasure.** “Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do [moral], as well as to determine what we shall do [psychological]. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong [moral], on the other the chain of causes and effects [psychological], are fastened to their throne.” “The principle of utility [Bentham came to prefer the term “the greatest happiness or greatest felicity principle”] recognises this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear [cut up; carve?] the fabric of felicity [i.e., happiness] by the hands of reason and of law.”

2. **Principle of utility, what.** “By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever [by either private individuals or governmental agents], according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest in in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness.” [Mill’s statement of the principle is similar to this. See paragraph 6 below.]

3. **Utility, what.** “By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness, (all this in the present case comes to the same thing) or (what comes again to the same thing) to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party [either “the community in general” or “a particular individual”] whose interest is considered.”

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1 All bracketed insertions are by KBJ.
4. Interest of the community, what. “The community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its members. The interest of the community then is, what?—the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it.” [Atomism; additivity.]

5. [Interest of the individual, what.] “A thing is said to promote the interest, or to be for the interest, of an individual, when it tends to add to the sum total of his pleasures: or, what comes to the same thing, to diminish the sum total of his pains.”

6. An action conformable to the principle of utility, what. “An action then may be said to be conformable to the principle of utility, or, for shortness sake, to utility, (meaning with respect to the community at large) when the tendency it has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any [tendency] it has to diminish it.” [Mill’s statement of the principle is similar to this. See paragraph 2 above.]

7. A measure of government conformable to the principle of utility, what. A measure of government “is but a particular kind of action, performed by a particular person or persons.”

8. Laws or dictates of utility, what. Terminological.

9. A partisan of the principle of utility, what. Terminological; we, today, would call “a partisan of the principle of utility” a utilitarian. Bentham appears not to have used that term (or, indeed, “utilitarianism”).

10. Ought, ought not, right and wrong, &c. how to be understood. “Of an action that is conformable to the principle of utility, one may always say either that it is one that ought to be done, or at least that it is not one that ought not to be done. One may say also, that it is right it should be done; at least that it is not wrong it should be done: that it is a right action; at least that it is not a wrong action. When thus interpreted, the words ought, and right and wrong, and others of that stamp, have a meaning: when otherwise, they have none.” The following expressions are synonymous:
a. Act x is conformable to the principle of utility.

b. Act x ought to be done.

c. It is right that x should be done.

d. Act x is a right action.

Hence, act x is right iff x is conformable to the principle of utility. When we combine this statement with paragraph 6, we get: Act x is right iff the tendency x has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any [tendency] x has to diminish it.\(^2\)

11. To prove the rectitude of this principle is at once unnecessary and impossible. “Is [the principle of utility] susceptible of any direct proof? it should seem not: for that which is used to prove every thing else, cannot itself be proved: a chain of proofs must have their commencement somewhere. To give such proof is as impossible as it is needless.” The principle functions as an axiom\(^3\) in Bentham’s system.

12. It has seldom, however, as yet, been consistently pursued. “By the natural constitution of the human frame, on most occasions of their lives men in general embrace this principle, without thinking of it.”

13. It can never be consistently combated. “When a man attempts to combat the principle of utility, it is with reasons drawn, without his being aware of it, from the very principle itself.”

14. Course to be taken for surmounting prejudices that may have been entertained against it. Bentham gives a recipe for reconciling oneself to the principle of utility.

\(^2\) Compare Mill: “The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure.” *Utilitarianism*, chap. II, para. 2.

\(^3\) “A proposition laid down as one from which we may begin; an assertion that is taken as fundamental, at least for the purposes of the branch of enquiry in hand.” Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 32.
Chapter IV (“Value of a Lot of Pleasure or Pain, How to Be Measured”).

1. **Use of this chapter.** “Pleasures, then, and the avoidance of pains, are the *ends* which the legislator has in view: it behoves him therefore to understand their *value*. Pleasures and pains are the *instruments* he has to work with: it behoves him therefore to understand their *force*, which is again, in another point of view, their *value*.”

2. **Circumstances to be taken into account in estimating the value [quantity?] of a pleasure or pain considered with reference to a single person, and by itself.**
   
   a. **Its intensity.** How intense is it?

   b. **Its duration.** How long does it last?

   c. **Its certainty or uncertainty.** How certain is it to come about?

   d. **Its propinquity [nearness in space; proximity] or remoteness.** How close is it in the causal chain/nexus?

3. —**considered as connected with other pleasures or pains.**
   
   e. **Its fecundity.** “[T]he chance it has of being followed by sensations of the *same* kind: that is, pleasures, if it be a pleasure; pains, if it be a pain.”

   f. **Its purity.** “[T]he chance it has of *not* being followed by sensations of the *opposite* kind: that is, pains, if it be a pleasure: pleasures, if it be a pain.” An impure pleasure is likely to be followed by pain. A pure pleasure is *not* likely to be followed by pain.

4. —**considered with reference to a number of persons.**
g. Its extent. “[T]he number of persons to whom it extends; or (in other words) who are affected by it.”

5. Process for estimating the tendency of any act or event. This (read it aloud) is Bentham’s felicific calculus. Illustrate it with my large diagram (S, T, U, V, &c).

6. Use of the foregoing process. “It is not to be expected that this process should be strictly pursued previously to every moral judgment, or to every legislative or judicial operation. It may, however, be always kept in view: and as near as the process actually pursued on these occasions approaches to it, so near will such process approach to the character of an exact one.” This replies to the lack-of-time objection.

7. The same process applicable to good and evil, profit and mischief, and all other modifications of pleasure and pain. The same process is applicable to pleasure and pain in any guise or shape. Pleasure is called good, profit, convenience, advantage, benefit, emolument, and happiness. Pain is called evil, mischief, inconvenience, disadvantage, loss, and unhappiness.

8. Conformity of men’s practice to this theory. “In all this there is nothing but what the practice of mankind, wheresoever they have a clear view of their own interest, is perfectly conformable to.”

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Terms in parentheses are KBJ’s. All other terms are Bentham’s, from chap. I, para. 3, and chap. IV, para. 7.