

Plotinus on Eudaimonia

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The purpose of this paper is to discuss a tract from the Enneads listed 46th in the chronological order and entitled Περὶ Εὐδαιμονίας. Many critics have translated this as 'Happiness', but as I shall make clear, eudaimonia is not equivalent to happiness. Neither is it equivalent to 'well-being', 'Glückseligkeit', 'bonheur' or any such unqualified term. A more recent attempt to translate it comes from Ciapalo¹ who calls it: 'the good state of one's inner reality' and equates it with the attainment of the One by those beings who live superabundantly.² As we shall see, this is much closer to what Plotinus has in mind and since a single term does not suffice I shall transliterate rather than translate the term and hope that by the end of this paper the content of eudaimonia will have been made clear.

I propose to cover the topic just as Plotinus has laid it out in *Ennead* I.4.; first, an examination of his criticism of previous thinkers on the matter; second, an analysis of his description of *eudaimonia*; and third, the implications this teaching has for humanity in the material world. We will examine his views on pain and suffering, on suicide, on the levels of consciousness and on the practical position of one being eudaimonic while still occupying a body in the temporal sphere.

Plotinus devotes the first two chapters to criticism of previous viewpoints on the nature of *eudaimonia*. Most modern commentators refer us consistently to Aristotle here but with terminology such as εὐπαθεία³ (Ch.1 line 5) and τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ἔργῳ⁴ (Ch. 1, 7-8) it is clear that the Stoics are also under consideration. Although Plotinus criticises more than one school it is practically the same criticism which is directed against them all. His opening lines give us an understanding of his approach. 'Suppose we assume that living well τὸ εὖ ζῆν and τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν to be one and the same; shall we not then have to allow a share in it to other living things as well as ourselves?'⁵ This equation of eudaimonia and τὸ εὖ ζῆν is, as most commentators note, drawn by Aristotle in *N.E.* 1098b20-21. συνάδει δὲ τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τὸ εὖ ζῆν καὶ τὸ εὖ πράττειν τὸν εὐδαίμονα. There is in fact an even better parallel in *E.E.* 1219b1ff. τὸ τε γὰρ εὖ πράττειν καὶ τὸ εὖ ζῆν τὸ αὐτὸ τῷ εὐδαιμονεῖν. Indeed *SVF* 3.17 informs us that Stoics and Epicureans

also equated these terms. Since the Stoics are clearly referred to later in this chapter, let us concentrate on Aristotle first.

The key to this criticism is the phrase τὸ εὖ ζῆν, which I translate as 'living well', since it is the notion of activity inherent in *eudaimonia* which Aristotle is keen to get across.

We are now in a position to define the happy man as one who is active in accordance with complete virtue... throughout a complete lifetime.'

(*N.E.*1101 a 14-16 Pen. tr. Thompson).⁶

This has long been noted, for example, by Stewart⁷ who states that: 'It is Aristotle's object in the *N.E.* to give new meaning to this accepted term (*eudaimonia*). It is an active function, not a condition of passivity. It is noble living, in the active sense'. Now, Plotinus asks, if *eudaimonia* is simply equivalent to living well, on what grounds do we exclude all other living things which accomplish the task of living well?

The Stoics are then subjected to a similar critique. If *eudaimonia* consists ἐν εὐπαθείᾳ (satisfactory experiences) or ἐν τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ἔργῳ (natural work), how can we exclude any living thing which is capable of achieving the aforementioned states? Chapter One closes by bringing the same criticism to bear on both Hedonists and Epicureans.

A very difficult Chapter Two expands on the criticisms voiced in the first chapter and in typical Plotinian fashion the criticism now comes from a different angle. The second half of this chapter is undoubtedly directed against the Stoics, being marked out clearly by the phrase τὰ πρῶτα κατὰ φύσιν (primary natural needs) while the first part has, I suggest, been mistakenly assigned to Aristotle. Plotinus begins it by stating: 'Those who deny it (viz. *eudaimonia*) to plants because they have no sensation (μὴ αἰσθάνεσθαι) run the risk of denying it to all living things'. Anyone who has commented on this passage has referred us to Aristotle's *N.E.*1178b28 where it is claimed Aristotle denies *eudaimonia* to plants because they lack sensation. That is not the case. First, in *N.E.*1178b28 Aristotle does not specifically deny *eudaimonia* to plants but rather to τὰ λοιπὰ ζῶα. Second, Aristotle does not deny the other animals *eudaimonia* because they lack *aisthesis* but because they are bereft of *theoria*. In Aristotle's view contemplation is the most divine-like aspect which humanity possesses and in contemplating we are most like God and therefore in possession of *eudaimonia*. It is possession of this faculty which bestows *eudaimonia* and thus plants and animals are necessarily excluded. Clearly, that is not the view being criticised in the opening line of Chapter Two.

The opening line of Chapter Two makes better sense directed against Epictetus rather than Aristotle, when we consider the following:

What then is the true nature of God? Flesh? Far from it! Land? Far from it! Fame? Far from it! It is intelligence, knowledge, right reason. Here, therefore, and only here, shall you seek the true nature of the good. Surely, you do not seek it in a plant do you? Plants are incapable of dealing even with external impressions, for that reason you do not speak of the 'good' in referring to them. The good requires, therefore, the faculty of using external impressions'.

Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.8.2-5 (Oldfather trans.)

Now this seems to me much closer to what Plotinus is getting at. By *aisthesis* Plotinus means sensation, as is clear from the way he defines it in the lines that follow. Although Epictetus does not use the word *aisthesis*, it is clear from τὰ φυτὰ οὐδὲ φαντασίαις χρηστικὰ εἶσιν that this is what he means. Plants don't have the ability to sense, they can make no use of external impressions. Also the emphasis here on *aisthesis* is particularly relevant to Stoicism, since the Stoic *logos* is fundamentally based on sensory knowledge. The argument against Epictetus in summary form is, that if *eudaimonia* is made to depend on something as basic as sensation then even humanity would be capable of losing its *eudaimonia* if for some reason it lost its ability to sense.

Having dismissed the view that *aisthesis* is a necessary faculty for the acquisition of *eudaimonia* Plotinus then examines the criterion of rationality. He admits that this is a better measuring stick for *eudaimonia* but still not the correct one. Armstrong⁸ suggests at this point that 'the serious discussion of their position (viz. the Stoics) begins here'. However, Epictetus as the object of Plotinus' criticism in the first half of Chapter Two must not be doubted on this basis. It is quite conceivable that Plotinus should criticise Epictetus at length before turning to the Stoics in general. As Colish⁹ has noted: 'In the first place, none of the Roman Stoics was an official head of the school. Each of the Roman Stoics reflects his own personal tastes and attitudes and feels free to pick and choose among Stoic and other ideas...'

Plotinus concedes that the Stoics are at least in a better area when they posit the rational life as the key to *eudaimonia*, but they are still criticised for not explaining satisfactorily *why* this is so. Indeed it would not be possible for them to explain in satisfactory terms for Plotinus since the Stoic *logos* is ultimately based on sensory knowledge while Plotinus' eudaimonic sage, as we shall see, is guided by principles from above. As Plass¹⁰ notes: 'Though he (Plotinus) is sympathetic to the inwardness of Stoic ethics, this line of thought (viz. that all reality is material) leads Plotinus to reject their understanding of happiness as 'rational life'. He does so because as materialists they are bound to understand life in environmental terms'.

The criticisms of linking *eudaimonia* to what is simply a life actively led or to a particular function performed come better into focus when we examine Plotinus' own criteria for *eudaimonia*. In short, *eudaimonia* must be linked to life, and since there are varying degrees of life only the fullest life constitutes *eudaimonia*, that which Plotinus calls ἄραν . τὸ ζῆν in ch. 3.24. Only human beings have the ability to partake of fullest life, since only human beings have a higher soul which never descends from the totality of life in *Nous*. As Armstrong¹¹ puts it: 'It must be remembered, however, that for Plotinus man is a 'bridge-being', intermediate between the two worlds. He alone is present in the intelligible personally in his own right, the other creatures only by their archetypes'. On this basis, the inability to partake of fullest life, plants and animals are excluded from *eudaimonia*. It is also on this basis that Plotinus insists that they can live well on their own levels. Why should one deny a share of the good life to plants, he asks in ch. 1.21, simply because one does not think them important? All living things, by virtue of the fact that they have life, have the ability to live well. *Eudaimonia*, however, is life at the level of *Nous*, fullest life, possible only for humanity; so to equate it with living well in general or completing one's proper function leaves one open to the sort of charge Plotinus makes in the first two chapters.

Chapters Three and Four make it clear that *eudaimonia* is the result of a life of virtue (outlined in *Ennead* I.2) which enables us to live a life at the highest level. Technically it constitutes the return of the individual to consciousness on the level of the higher soul, that is, life at the level of *Nous*. Plotinus is at pains to point out that life on this level is totally self-sufficient (see also V.3.5.34) and as a result perfect (v. VI.7.8.27). It is not enough to be simply conscious of a higher part; we must actually become conscious on that higher level. In terms borrowed from Aristotle, Plotinus tells us in *Ennead* I.4.10 that we must possess ourselves not only potentially but actually. Again the discipline necessary for such a life is barely touched on here: presumably what was said in *Ennead* I.2 was deemed sufficient. In *Ennead* I.2.6.13-15 we are told:

Wisdom, theoretical and practical, consists in the contemplation of that which Intellect contains; but Intellect has it by immediate contact. There are two kinds of wisdom, one in Intellect, one in Soul. That which is there in Intellect is not virtue, that in the soul is virtue'.

What that appears to mean is that the virtue called wisdom belongs to the soul which is not on the level of Intellect. Practical wisdom first, followed by theoretical wisdom (contemplation), brings us to the level of Intellect, but we still contemplate from outside: subject, object. The sage is one who has passed over into Intellect and his wisdom there is of a different kind. He can now contemplate all Forms

directly. Being conscious at his highest level of soul, he is real Being and his wisdom is beyond virtue even: his wisdom is substance. Life lived at this level has important consequences which take up the remainder of this tract.

One implication which is taken up in Chapters Five to Eight is that the placing of *eudaimonia* on the level of Intellect protects it, in Plotinus' view, from disturbances in the temporal sphere which impinge on the body/soul compound. Thus pain, sickness and bad fortune in general, do not disturb the sage's *eudaimonia*. But what seems strange, at least to me, is that Plotinus does not state the most obvious defence against those who would question the imperturbability of the sage. He does not state that, since *eudaimonia* is lived at the level of *Nous*, it is, therefore, outside space and time, and so, we must assume, incapable of being lost if it is once established. The closest Plotinus comes to stating this is *Ennead* I.5.2.4-5 where we are told that *eudaimonia* is measured not by time but by virtue. (See also *Enneads* II.5.1.9; II.5.3.8).

Yet in Chapters Five to Eight where objections are raised against the sage's impregnability, (mainly Peripatetic criticisms levelled against the Stoic sage), Plotinus does not reply in terms of the timelessness of *eudaimonia*. He chooses rather to defend himself by highlighting the two different levels of soul and separating the higher from the compound. Much of the space is given over to explaining why the eudaimonic person, who still operates a body in the temporal sphere, will choose some things and avoid others because they add to or subtract from the body/soul compound (*τὸ συναμφοτέρον* it is called in ch. 14, line 1). Indeed we have to wait until Chapters Nine and Ten before Plotinus draws the full implications of the metaphysic he has presented in Chapters Three and Four, and even then the timelessness, and thus impregnability of *eudaimonia* is not directly stated.

Before we move on to the important Chapters Nine and Ten, two features should be noted. The first is the undoubted borrowings of Ambrose from Plotinus. The opening lines of ch. six of I.4 are to be found restated in *Jacob and the Happy Life* 1.7.32:

'But [we shall answer], if our argument made well-being (to; eujdaimonei'n) consist in freedom from pain and sickness and ill-luck and falling into great misfortunes, it would be impossible for anyone to be well off when any of these circumstances opposed to well-being was present. But if well-being is to be found in possession of the true good...' *Enn.* I.4.6.1-5.

'For if the definition were such that the happy life was the one that could be found free and clear of unfortunate occurrences, surely someone could not be termed happy if such occurrences came to pass. And so such matters have been put aside, and in judging of the happy life only this is

demanded, that the definition of it should consist in nothing else but the possession of the true and the good.' Ambrose, *Jacob and the Happy Life* 1.7.32 (McHugh tr.).

Chapter 7.33 ff and other parts of I.4 are also made good use of by Ambrose.¹² *Ennead* I.4 however is not one of the tractates noted by Courcelle in *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*, but without doubt it should be added to the tracts which Augustine probably heard in the sermons of Ambrose. Indeed Augustine quoted from *Ennead* I.4 in his final days when the Vandals were besieging Hippo: '...et se inter haec mala cuiusdam sapientis sententia consulebatur dicentis: Non erit magnus magnum putans, quod cadunt ligna et lapides et moriuntur mortales.'¹³

A second feature of note is the issue of suicide which is raised here. In ch.7.31-32 we find: 'If he is taken away as a war-slave, the way lies open to depart, if it is not possible to live well (εὐδαιμονεῖν).' Armstrong¹⁴ acknowledges that this means suicide but insists that Plotinus only accepted it as legitimate in absolutely desperate circumstances. Again in ch. 8.8-9 Plotinus says: 'If it (viz. pain) goes on, he will consider what he ought to do; the pain has not taken away his power of self disposal'. Bouillet¹⁵ notes regarding this: 'Il est facile de reconnaître que toutes les idées sont empruntées aux Stoïciens. Plotin fait ici allusion au suicide, que ces philosophes permettent au sage'.¹⁶ Suicide it seems, then, is permitted only for the sage and only in desperate circumstances.

I suggest that this is not the complete picture. *Ennead* I.4. [46], it seems to me, sees suicide as quite a viable option and presents, if not a development, then at least a switch of emphasis on the matter. In *Ennead* I.9 'On going out of the body', number 16 in Porphyry's chronological order, we find an early view on suicide which is in keeping with Armstrong's suggestion that Plotinus curtailed the Stoic teaching on suicide which advocated fairly free exit from the body. Thus the treatise begins with the emphatic but cryptic: 'You shall not take out your soul, so that it may not go: for if it goes thus, it will go taking something with it so that it can manage to get out... but the soul waits for the body to depart...' Later the potential suicide is admonished again: 'But suppose someone contrives the dissolution of his body? He has used violence and gone away himself... one must not act like this'. I.9.7-9. Finally we are reminded: 'And if each man has a destined time allotted to him, it is not a good thing to go out before it, unless as we maintain, it is necessary... one must not take out the soul as long as there is any possibility of progress.' I.9.15-19.

By the time we reach I.4 I think a change is discernible in his outlook. This being his 46th treatise, it was written when he was suffering from a painful illness which was eventually to kill him. And

even taking into account that for the most part it is the sage who is now being discussed, it should be noted that in I.4 we are directed to suicide as a viable option no less than five times. In contrast to *Ennead* I.9 where we are warned that we must remain for the time allotted us, now we are told: 'He must give to this bodily life as much as it needs and he can, but he is himself free to abandon it, and he will abandon it in nature's good time, and, besides, *has the right to decide about this for himself*' (ch. 16.17-20). The key passage is to be found in chapter 7.42 ff: 'Anyhow, many people will do better by becoming war-slaves; and it is in their own power to depart if they find the burden heavy. If they stay, or if they stay unreasonably, when they ought not to, it is their own fault'. Now we are discussing the masses, not specifically the sage, and suicide is still casually advocated.

I contend therefore, that the change in his view on suicide from I.9 to I.4 cannot be explained by a change in the subject, from the ordinary individual to the sage, but rather the change may be due to his own particular circumstances at the time of writing *Ennead* I.4 i.e. a painful illness. So in *Ennead* [46] I.4 he has relaxed his restrictions on suicide so that it is permissible simply if the burden is heavy and although *Ennead* I.9 may represent his wish to restrict the Stoics in their views about the legitimacy of suicide,¹⁷ *Ennead* I.4 I think shows a return to what is tantamount to the Stoic dictum 'the door is open'.

Chapters Nine and Ten bring us to the most difficult metaphysical implications of his theory of *eudaimonia*. The subject matter is consciousness. It would require a separate paper to examine this protean concept as it is taught by Plotinus, not the least difficulty being the correct interpretation of the variety of terms he uses in describing it. I concern myself only with its treatment in *Ennead* I.4 which is vital to give the complete picture of *eudaimonia*.

As in earlier chapters Plotinus begins with a query: 'But what if the good man is unconscious, his mind swamped by sickness or magic arts?' (*Ennead* I.4.9.1-2) Lack of consciousness is irrelevant to *eudaimonia* is the response. Chapters Nine and Ten suggest the following picture. The sage is one who has become conscious again on the level of his higher soul in *Nous*. There are, as Smith¹⁸ has already indicated, two different types of consciousness. 'At the level of the higher self there is an internal or horizontal consciousness, parallel with self-knowledge at the level of *Nous*. There is also the activity of awareness which links the empirical self with the higher self and which may be described as vertical'. The point to be made is that if once we become conscious on this higher level *eudaimonia* is achieved, since that is what *eudaimonia* is, fullest life. What happens to consciousness on the empirical level is irrelevant. We *can* be conscious of this higher life on the empirical level but it is not a *sine qua non*. Hence Plotinus claims that disruption of this empirical consciousness through magic or

illness is irrelevant since *eudaimonia* continues at a higher level. Vertical consciousness is not necessary. Analogies are presented to elucidate this view. One does not need to be conscious of one's health to be healthy or of one's beauty to be beautiful.

Chapter Ten continues the explanation. Activity at the level of *Nous* is normally passed on to the empirical level through the operation of *phantasia*. We might imagine, he suggests, a mirror reflecting what occurs in one place to another. The mirror represents the work of the faculty of *phantasia*. So we perceive on the empirical level what occurs on the noetic level. We are not always aware of noetic activity, especially in youth, because we have images from the sensible world which distract us (vide I.1.11 .1ff). The point being made in Chapter Ten is that this process, the making and grasping of images, is separate from and irrelevant to the operation of *Nous* and one's *eudaimonia*. Since *eudaimonia* is prior to conscious activity it is not dependent on it. The reading example given is meant to make this clear. We read (as we are active in *Nous*) regardless of whether we create *phantasmata* or not. We do not need to be conscious of what we are doing; indeed to make judgements would destroy the act itself. We read better when we are not aware that we are reading. *Nous* operates on a more pure level of consciousness when we don't use images and there is no subject/object relationship. We can read, as we can be eudaimonic, without being aware. Wijsenbeek¹⁹ is unsure whether she should connect the mirror and reading analogies but I think it is clear that they are two parts of a single explanation.

On this basis it seems to me that Rist is mistaken when he comments on Chapter Nine. There we find Plotinus saying: '...if the real activity of the substance goes on in him, and this activity is unsleeping; then the good man, in that he is a good man, will be active even then. It will not be the whole of him that is unaware of this activity, but only a part of him.' I.4.9.22-25.

About this Rist²⁰ says: 'It is hard to see how, if the sage when suffering loss of consciousness possesses once again a divisible self, Plotinus is not contradicting the previous tenor of his argument and suggesting strongly that the philosopher can lose his philosophical happiness'. This is not so. When we have become conscious in our higher soul we have become the *real* person and all of the *real* person. When the philosopher becomes unconscious he does not possess 'a divisible self' as Rist suggests; the 'part of him' (τι μέρος αὐτοῦ) refers only to the imaginative faculty²¹. This is not strictly part of the real man but only something that has attached itself.

Rist continues:²² 'And there is a further difficulty which cannot be neglected at this stage. If consciousness is ultimately irrelevant to the achieved happiness of the sage, and if, furthermore, there is in every man a higher self which lives eternally 'above' and is engaged in

contemplation of the Forms, why should we not say that every man is equally happy? The answer to this question certainly cannot be, as we might have hoped, that happiness is the state achieved by the philosopher when he integrates his personality with the higher self and reduces the bodily aspects of the soul to mere accessories, for Plotinus has now suggested that this integration can to some extent be reversed. The only answer seems to be the extremely paradoxical, but perhaps no less Plotinian position that everyone is in fact happy all the time. While the difference between the philosopher and the rest of mankind is that he is aware of the fact while they are not.

Again what Rist says here is clearly false. Although we all possess a higher self which remains in *Nous*, *eudaimonia* belongs only to those who have made the ascent and actually lived this higher life. We are not 'happy all the time'; only the virtuous have *eudaimonia*, vide I.5.2.4-5 where *eudaimonia* is measured by virtue. Again, in III.2.4.45-47 we are told: 'People must not demand to be well off (τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν) who have not done what deserves well-being (εὐδαιμονίας). See also III.2.5.1ff.

Rist's conclusion that 'the only answer... that everyone is in fact happy all the time... but the philosopher is aware of the fact while they are not', is demonstrably false. We are told clearly in Chapter Ten that even if the philosopher is unaware of this higher life, his *eudaimonia*, once achieved, continues regardless. The whole point of this chapter is to explain that consciousness of the higher life is *not* a sine qua non for *eudaimonia*. Consciousness of this higher life is not, therefore, what separates the philosopher from the rest of mankind, but integration of his ego with his higher self through virtue, is.

In Chapter Twelve room is made for pleasure in the eudaimonic life but it is a pleasure of a very particular kind. It is the pleasure only of the perfection of one's state. More time is given to the sharp dualism of body and soul which occupies the remainder of the tractate. It is backed by the authority of Plato who is in the last section finally mentioned by name. The body/soul dualism is highlighted in Chapter Thirteen where Plotinus refers to Phalaris, tyrant of Acragas, and to his reputation for cruelty, in the shape of a bull with a hollow interior in which he roasted his victims alive. It was a commonplace paradox among Stoics and Epicureans that the wise man would still retain his *eudaimonia* while being roasted in the brazen bull. Plotinus argues that it does not make sense for the Stoics and Epicureans to make this claim on the basis of their view of the nature of man, who exists on one of level reality. How can the same thing be pleasant and painful? It does, however, make sense for Plotinus to make this claim since his sage lives on two different levels. There is the lower self which suffers in the bull, but there is also the higher self (the real self) which remains unaffected.

In the last section of Chapter Fifteen Plotinus describes how the sage will control himself and interact with other members of his community. He tells us:

'In this state of mind (viz. true wisdom) he will be without fear of anything. If he is afraid at all he is not perfect in virtue, but a kind of half-man. If sometimes when he is concerned with other things an involuntary fear comes upon him before he has time to reflect, the wise man [in him] will come and drive it away and quiet the child in him which is stirred to a sort of distress, by threatening or reasoning; the threatening will be unemotional, as if the child was shocked into quietness just by a severe look. A man of this sort will not be unfriendly or unsympathetic, he will be like this to himself and in dealing with his own affairs: but he will render to his friends all that he renders to himself, so that he will be the best of friends as well as remaining intelligent.'

(I.4.15.14-25)

This image of the wise man unemotionally instructing his lesser self and others in the community has been misinterpreted, perhaps, by some commentators. The Plotinian sage has been dismissed as someone who is for the most part unconcerned with other human beings. Westra²³ confuses lack of emotion with lack of concern:

'The picture that emerges is clear: the good man may love all creation and may recognize and admire its Source and Father in it. What he may not do is sympathize or be over-involved emotionally with the feelings and needs of any individual being. Of course it would not be hard to demonstrate that Plotinus neither practised nor advocated ill-will or ill-treatment of others. It simply seems to me that virtuous behavior towards our neighbours cannot be based on carefully cultivated indifference.'

Paul Plass²⁴ too sees irony in the combination of 'he is not unfriendly or unsympathetic' (ch. 15 line 22) and 'so he will render to his friends all that he renders to himself' (lines 23-24), claiming that:

'he is anything but well-disposed to himself in any ordinary sense of the term, and in respect to others he can group pity with envy and jealousy as examples of moral evils to which true virtue is superior. (*Ennead* I.1.10.14ff).'

Both Plass and Westra have missed an essential point in Plotinus' ethical teaching. They fail to understand what Plotinus means by civic virtue as demonstrated by the sage. First we are told that civic virtue is a necessity for the sage (see *Enn.* I. 3.6.14-18). But civic virtue as

practised by the sage is of a different kind to that mentioned in Plato's *Republic* 430cf. The wisdom gained by the sage 'comes after the natural virtue, and then perfects the character...' (see *Enn.* I.3.6. 20-21). The wise man is guided by higher principles and his virtue, as practised in society, is guided by those principles: this is the real nature of civic virtue (τῆς πολιτικῆς ἢ οὐσίας, *Enn.* I.2.3.3). The real nature of civic virtue is unemotional instruction of one's fellow human beings. By demonstrating the 'upward path' one is being the best of friends and showing the only concern that is worthwhile. To show pity or to be emotionally guided would be a disservice to one's friends.

Practice of this kind of civic virtue does not make one an automaton. Porphyry provides us with examples of the sage's concerned activity within his community: we are told that his house was full of boys and girls, orphans entrusted to him of which he took great care. '...he shielded so many from the worries and cares of ordinary life...' *V. P.* 9.17. Porphyry also adds that he was gentle (πρᾶος) and at the disposal of all who had any sort of acquaintance with him'. (*V. P.* 9.19). As Rist²⁵ notes: '...in practice he has recognised that concern for others does not entail the withdrawal of the mind from higher things and its submergence in the lower. The Plotinian soul is a subtle instrument; it can contemplate the higher and care for the lower at the same time'.

Yet there is a criticism to be made. Is this sort of instruction beneficial to the masses, many of whom will not possess the philosophical bent? Smith²⁶ sees this problem and in his study of Porphyry he notes: 'Porphyry is not, then, concerned with total salvation. He is indeed interested in the salvation of the lower self... To this extent he differs from Plotinus in that he realised the implications of the difficulties of the philosophical way and ardently searched for a more embracing discipline'. He adds: '...for Porphyry the matter seemed different. Firstly he inherited from Plotinus a fairly comprehensive metaphysical system and saw as his task the clear exposition of this system which inevitably would include the correction of minor points and the filling in of loopholes. The fate of the ordinary man was such a loophole.'²⁷

In conclusion, then, *eudaimonia* is the result of a life of virtue and wisdom, practical and theoretical. It involves the wise man in an ascent to Intellect of which he becomes a part. He becomes a one-many. In this way he shares in the totality and fullness of life. *Eudaimonia* involves an ascent which takes him out of body and into the realm of Real Being. To simply call it happiness just won't do.

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Notes

1. Ciapalo, R.T., Abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, vol. 48, no. 6, Dec. p.1467a. Ciapalo's thesis is entitled "Life" (*Zoe*) in Plotinus' *Explanation of Reality*, Chicago: Loyola University, 1987.
2. Ibid.
3. Εὐπαθείαι characterise the Stoic sage: εἶναι δὲ καὶ εὐπαθείας φασὶ τρεῖς, χαράν, εὐλάβειαν, βούλησιν. D.L.7.11 6. See also Cicero *Tusc.Disp.*4.12-14.
4. See D.L. 7.87-88; Cicero *de Finibus* 2.34; 3.31,61; Marcus Aurelius *Meditations* 4.51; Epictetus *Discourses* 1.26.1-2, 2.6.9; Seneca *de vita beata* 3.3. Although Aristotle also thought that we were to some degree led kata; fuvsin (N.E. 1097b30, 1177a14), the phrase was certainly more recognised as a Stoic formula.
5. Armstrong translation, adapted. All translations from Plotinus are by A.H. Armstrong from *Plotinus* in the Loeb series. All line references are to Henry/Schwyzler's revised edition in the OCT series.
6. That Aristotle thought eudaimonia to consist of activity is easily demonstrated. See *E. E.* 1219a- 1219b8; 1219 b18-1219b20 (where Aristotle explains: ὅμοιοι γὰρ καθεύδοντες πάντες, αἴπιον δ' ὅτι ἀργία ψυχῆς ὁ ὕπνος ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐνέργεια.) *N E.* 1099a29-30; 1100b10; 1100b19-20; 1100b33; 1102b5-8; 1144a5-6; 1153b17-18; 1169b29; 1170a7-11; 1177b23-24; *Pol.* 1325a32; 1323b32-34; 1325b14-16; 1328a37-38; 1332a9-10.
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