

## PLOTINUS ON THE DOUBLE *HAMARTIA* OF THE SOUL

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1. Often, after waking up to myself from the body, that is, externalising myself in relation with other things, while entering into myself, I beheld a beauty of wondrous quality, and believe then that I am most to be identified with my better part, that I enjoy the best quality of life, and have become united with the divine and situated within in, actualizing myself at that level, and situating myself above all else in the intelligible world. Following on this repose within the divine, and in bewilderment, how on earth did I ever come down here, and how ever did my soul come to be enclosed in a body, being such as it has revealed itself to be, even while in the body (IV 8 [6] 1.1-11, trans. Gerson *et al.* 2018).

Πολλάκις ἐγειρόμενος εἰς ἑμαυτὸν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος  
καὶ γινόμενος τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἔξω, ἑμαυτοῦ δὲ εἴσω,  
θαυμαστὸν ἡλίκον ὁρῶν κάλλος, καὶ τῆς κρείττονος μοίρας  
πιστεύσας τότε μάλιστα εἶναι, ζωὴν τε ἀρίστην ἐνεργήσας  
καὶ τῷ θεῷ εἰς ταῦτὸν γεγενημένος καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἰδρυθεὶς (5)  
εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἐλθὼν ἐκείνην ὑπὲρ πᾶν τὸ ἄλλο νοητὸν  
ἑμαυτὸν ἰδρύσας, μετὰ ταύτην τὴν ἐν τῷ θεῷ στάσιν εἰς  
λογισμὸν ἐκ νοῦ καταβὰς ἀπορῶ, πῶς ποτε καὶ νῦν κατα-  
βαίνω, καὶ ὅπως ποτέ μοι ἔνδον ἡ ψυχὴ γεγένηται τοῦ  
σώματος τοῦτο οὕσα, οἷον ἐφάνη καθ' ἑαυτήν, καίπερ (10)  
οὕσα ἐν σώματι.

2. It is here that there befalls it the so-called ‘moulting of feathers’ and its coming to be in the binds of the body, once it has failed of its blameless cooperation in the administration of the better alternative, which involved remaining with the universal soul; that previous situation was altogether better for it, as it was tending upwards. Consequent on its fall, it has been caught down here ... and is active at the level of sense-perception, because it is impeded from the outset from activating itself intellectually ... whereas once it has turned itself back towards intellection, it is said to be freed from its bonds and to ‘ascend’, when it has taken its start in ‘contemplating Beings’ from its exercise of **recollection**; for despite everything it always retains **some element of the transcendent** (IV 8 [6] 4.21-31, trans. Gerson *et al.* 2018).

Ἐνθα καὶ συμβαίνει  
αὐτῇ τὸ λεγόμενον πτερορρυῆσαι καὶ ἐν δεσμοῖς τοῖς τοῦ  
σώματος γενέσθαι ἀμαρτούση τοῦ ἀβλαβοῦς τοῦ ἐν τῇ  
διοικήσει τοῦ κρείττονος, ὃ ἦν παρὰ τῇ ψυχῇ τῇ ὅλῃ· τὸ  
δὲ πρὸ τοῦ ἦν παντελῶς ἄμεινον ἀναδραμούση· εἴληπται (25)  
οὖν πεσοῦσα καὶ πρὸς τῷ δεσμῷ οὔσα καὶ τῇ αἰσθήσει  
ἐνεργοῦσα διὰ τὸ κωλύεσθαι τῷ νῷ ἐνεργεῖν καταρχάς,  
τεθάφθαι τε λέγεται καὶ ἐν σπηλαίῳ εἶναι, ἐπιστραφεῖσα  
δὲ πρὸς νόησιν λύεσθαι τε ἐκ τῶν δεσμῶν καὶ ἀναβαίνειν,  
ὅταν ἀρχὴν λάβῃ ἐξ **ἀναμνήσεως** θεᾶσθαι τὰ ὄντα· ἔχει (30)  
γάρ τι ἀεὶ οὐδὲν ἥττον **ὑπερέχον τι**.

3. Now, accepting that there are two stages of moral error, the one connected with the cause of the initial descent, the other with whatever vicious deeds one might commit when down here, the first is punished precisely by that very thing, what it experiences in the initial descent, while the nature of the second, when less serious, causes it to enter one body after another and the more quickly to proceed to judgment according to its due – the fact that it indeed comes about by divine ordinance is indicated by its very name, ‘judgment’, - while the immoderate type of vice merits punishment of a more serious nature, under the supervision of the avenging demons (IV 8 [6] 5.16-24, trans. Gerson *et al*, 2018).

Διττῆς δὲ τῆς ἀμαρτίας οὔσης, τῆς  
μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ κατελθεῖν αἰτίᾳ, τῆς δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ ἐνθάδε  
γενομένην κακὰ δρᾶσαι, <δίκη> ἢ μὲν ἐστὶν αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὃ  
πέπονθε κατελθοῦσα, τῆς δὲ τὸ ἔλαττον εἰς σώματα  
ἄλλα δύναι καὶ θᾶττον ἐκ κρίσεως τῆς κατ’ ἀξίαν (20)  
—ὃ δὴ θεσμῷ θείῳ γιγνόμενον διὰ τοῦ τῆς κρίσεως  
ὀνόματος δηλοῦται—τὸ δὲ τῆς κακίας ἄμετρον εἶδος  
μείζονος καὶ τῆς δίκης ἡξίωται ἐπιστασίᾳ τινυμένων  
δαιμόνων.

4. Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 7-9: 'It was the flower of your craft he stole, bright fire, the origin of every art; stole and handed to mortals. For this wrong he must pay the penalty the gods exact' (trans. D.H. Roberts, 2013).

τὸ σὸν γὰρ ἄνθος, παντέχνου πυρὸς σέλας,  
θνητοῖσι κλέψας ὥπασεν. τοιᾶσδέ τοι  
ἀμαρτίας σφε δεῖ θεοῖς δοῦναι δίκην.

5. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 1197: 'the ancient wrong-doings of this house' (trans. Fraenkel, 1950).

παλαιὰς τῶνδ' ἀμαρτίας δόμων

6. Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 1334-1337: 'Ignorance acquits your misdoing of baseness, and further the death of your wife made impossible the testing of her words, and thus she persuaded your mind' (transl. Kovacs, 1995).

τὴν δὲ σὴν ἀμαρτίαν  
τὸ μὴ εἰδέναι μὲν πρῶτον ἐκλύει κάκης· (1335)  
ἔπειτα δ' ἡ θανοῦς' ἀνήλωσεν γυνὴ  
λόγων ἐλέγχους, ὥστε σὴν πεῖσαι φρένα.

7. Whatever is it, then, that has made souls be oblivious of their father god, and, although they are portions from there and altogether his, be ignorant of both themselves and him? The principle of badness for them is audacity and becoming and the first otherness and willing to belong to themselves. Since they appear to delight in independence and indulged extensively in being moved by themselves, running in the opposite direction and getting far away, they were ignorant that they themselves are from there (V 1 [10] 1.1-8, trans. Perl, 2015).

Τί ποτε ἄρα ἐστὶ τὸ πεποιηκὸς τὰς ψυχὰς πατρὸς  
θεοῦ ἐπιλαθέσθαι, καὶ μοίρας ἐκεῖθεν οὔσας καὶ ὅλως ἐκεί-  
νου ἀγνοῆσαι καὶ ἑαυτὰς καὶ ἐκεῖνον; Ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν αὐταῖς  
τοῦ κακοῦ ἡ τόλμα καὶ ἡ γένεσις καὶ ἡ πρώτη ἑτερότης καὶ  
τὸ βουληθῆναι δὲ ἑαυτῶν εἶναι. Τῷ δὲ αὐτεξουσίῳ ἐπει- (5)  
δήπερ ἐφάνησαν ἡσθεῖσαι, πολλῷ τῷ κινεῖσθαι παρ' αὐτῶν  
κεχρημέναι, τὴν ἐναντίαν δραμοῦσαι καὶ πλείστην ἀπόστα-

σιν πεπονημένοι, ἡγνόησαν καὶ ἑαυτὰς ἐκεῖθεν εἶναι·

8. There will be no impediment to calling the whole ‘living thing’; as it is mixed both with respect to the lower components and what comes next, the true man, so to speak. But the former are the ‘lion-like’ element and, in short, the ‘variegated animal’; whereas, since man coincides with the reasoning soul, when we reason, it is *we* who reason, for reasonings are activities of the soul (I 1 [53] 7.18-24, trans. O’Daly, 2017).

Κωλύσει δὲ οὐδὲν

τὸ σύμπαν ζῶον λέγειν, μικτὸν μὲν τὰ κάτω, τὸ δὲ  
έντεῦθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀληθὴς σχεδόν· ἐκεῖνα δὲ τὸ λεον- (20)  
τῶδες καὶ τὸ ποικίλον ὅλως θηρίον. Συνδρόμου γὰρ  
ὄντος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῇ λογικῇ ψυχῇ, ὅταν λογιζώμεθα,  
ἡμεῖς λογιζόμεθα τῷ τοῦς λογισμοῦς ψυχῆς εἶναι ἐνεργή-  
ματα.

9. So the nature of that soul of ours will be free from the responsibility for all evils that a man does and suffers. These have to do with the living thing, the common entity, and ‘common’ as it has been described. But if opinion and reasoning are proper to the soul, how is it free from error? Now evils are done when we are overcome by what is worse - for we are multiple - by desire or anger or an evil image. And so-called thinking what is false, being an imagining, has not waited for the judgment of the reasoning faculty, but we have acted, persuaded by what is worse, just as in the case of perception, it happens that the common perception sees falsely, before the reasoning faculty passes judgment (I 1 [53] 9.1-12, trans. O’Daly, 2017).

Ἔσται τοίνυν ἐκείνης ἡμῖν τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ φύσις

ἀπηλλαγμένη αἰτίας κακῶν, ὅσα ἄνθρωπος ποιεῖ καὶ πάσ-  
χει· περὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῶον ταῦτα, τὸ κοινόν, καὶ κοινόν, ὡς εἴ-  
ρηται. Ἀλλ’ εἰ δόξα τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ διάνοια, πῶς ἀναμάρτη-  
τος; Ψευδὴς γὰρ δόξα καὶ πολλὰ κατ’ αὐτὴν πράττεται τῶν (5)  
κακῶν. Ἡ πράττεται μὲν τὰ κακὰ ἡττωμένων ἡμῶν ὑπὸ  
τοῦ χείρονος—πολλὰ γὰρ ἡμεῖς—ἢ ἐπιθυμίας ἢ θυμοῦ ἢ  
εἰδώλου κακοῦ· ἢ δὲ τῶν ψευδῶν λεγομένη διάνοια φαν-  
τασία οὗσα οὐκ ἀνέμεινε τὴν τοῦ διανοητικοῦ κρίσιν, ἀλλ’  
ἐπράξαμεν τοῖς χείροσι πεισθέντες, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς (10)

αἰσθήσεως πρὶν τῷ διανοητικῷ ἐπικρῖναι ψευδῆ ὅρᾱν  
συμβαίνει τῇ κοινῇ αἰσθήσει.