

PLOTINUS

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

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IN SEVEN VOLUMES

VII

ENNEADS

VI. 6-9



CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD

MCMLXXXVIII (1988)

PLOTINUS: ENNEAD VI. 9.

λόγω, ὡσπερ καὶ τὸ ὁρώμενον. ἑαυτὸν μὲν οὖν ἰδὼν
 10 τότε, ὅτε ὁρᾶ, τοιοῦτον ὄψεται, μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτῷ
 τοιοῦτῳ συνέσται καὶ τοιοῦτον αἰσθήσεται ἀπλοῦν
 γενόμενον. τάχα δὲ οὐδὲ "ὄψεται" λεκτέον, τὸ δὲ
 "ὄφθέν", εἴπερ δεῖ δύο ταῦτα λέγειν, τό τε ὁρῶν καὶ
 ὁρώμενον, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἐν ἄμφω· τολμηρὸς μὲν ὁ λόγος.
 τότε μὲν οὖν οὔτε ὁρᾶ οὐδὲ διακρίνει ὁ ὁρῶν οὐδὲ
 15 φαντάζεται δύο, ἀλλ' οἷον ἄλλος γενόμενος καὶ οὐκ
 αὐτὸς οὐδ' αὐτοῦ συντελεῖ ἐκεῖ, κακείνου γενόμενος ἐν
 ἔστιν ὡσπερ κέντρῳ κέντρον συνάψας. καὶ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα
 συνελθόντα ἐν ἔστι, τό τε δύο, ὅταν χωρὶς. οὕτω καὶ
 ἡμεῖς νῦν λέγομεν ἕτερον. διὸ καὶ δύσφραστον τὸ θέαμα·
 20 πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἀπαγγεῖλαιέ τις ὡς ἕτερον οὐκ ἰδὼν ἐκεῖ ὅτε
 ἐθεᾶτο ἕτερον, ἀλλὰ ἐν πρὸς ἑαυτόν;

11. Τοῦτο δὴ ἐθέλον δηλοῦν τὸ τῶν μυστηρίων
 τῶνδε ἐπίταγμα, τὸ μὴ ἐκφέρειν εἰς μὴ μεμνημένους,
 ὡς οὐκ ἔκφορον ἐκεῖνο ὄν, ἀπέειπε δηλοῦν πρὸς ἄλλον τὸ
 θεῖον, ὅτῳ μὴ καὶ αὐτῷ ἰδεῖν εὐτύχηται. ἐπεὶ τοίνυν δύο
 5 οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἦν αὐτὸς ὁ ἰδὼν πρὸς τὸ ἑωραμένον, ὡς
 ἂν μὴ ἑωραμένον, ἀλλ' ἠνωμένον, ὃς ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐκείνῳ
 ἐμίγνυτο εἰ μεμνῶτο, ἔχει ἂν παρ' ἑαυτῷ ἐκείνου
 εἰκόνα. ἦν δὲ ἐν καὶ αὐτὸς διαφορὰν ἐν αὐτῷ οὐδεμίαν
 πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἔχων οὔτε κατὰ ἄλλα—οὐ γὰρ τι ἐκινεῖτο
 10 παρ' αὐτῷ, οὐ θυμός, οὐκ ἐπιθυμία ἄλλου παρῆν αὐτῷ
 ἀναβεβηκότι—ἀλλ' οὐδὲ λόγος οὐδέ τις νόησις οὐδ'

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and above reason, as is that which is seen. When therefore the seer sees himself, then when he sees, he will see himself as like this, or rather he will be in union with himself as like this and will be aware of himself as like this since he has become single and simple. But perhaps one should not say "will see", but "was seen", if one must speak of these as two, the seer and the seen, and not both as one—a bold statement. So then the seer does not see and does not distinguish and does not imagine two, but it is as if he had become someone else and he is not himself and does not count as his own there, but has come to belong to that and so is one, having joined, as it were, centre to centre. For here too when the centres have come together they are one, but there is duality when they are separate. This also is how we now speak of "another". For this reason the vision is hard to put into words. For how could one announce that as another when he did not see, there when he had the vision, another, but one with himself?

11. This is the intention of the command given in the mysteries here below not to disclose to the uninitiated; since that Good is not disclosable, it prohibits the declaration of the divine to another who has not also himself had the good fortune to see. Since, then, there were not two, but the seer himself was one with the seen (for it was not really seen, but united to him), if he remembers who he became when he was united with that, he will have an image of that in himself. He was one himself, with no distinction in himself either in relation to himself or to other things—for there was no movement in him and he had no emotion, no desire for anything else when he had made the ascent—but there was not even any

ὄλως αὐτός, εἰ δεῖ καὶ τοῦτο λέγειν. ἀλλ' ὡσπερ
 ἀρπασθεῖς ἢ ἐνθουσιάσας ἡσυχῇ ἐν ἐρήμῳ καὶ
 καταστάσει γεγένηται ἀτρεμῆ, τῇ αὐτοῦ οὐσία οὐδαμῇ
 15 ἀποκλίνων οὐδὲ περὶ αὐτὸν στρεφόμενος, ἐστὼς πάντῃ
 καὶ οἶον στάσις γεγόμενος. οὐδὲ τῶν καλῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ
 καλὸν ἤδη ὑπερθέων, ὑπερβὰς ἤδη καὶ τὸν τῶν ἀρετῶν
 χορόν, ὡσπερ τις εἰς τὸ εἶσω τοῦ ἀδύτου εἰσὺς εἰς
 τοῦπίσω καταλιπὼν τὰ ἐν τῷ νεῷ ἀγάλματα, ἃ
 20 ἐξελθόντι τοῦ ἀδύτου πάλιν γίνεται πρῶτα μετὰ τὸ
 ἔνδον θέαμα καὶ τὴν ἐκεῖ συνουσίαν πρὸς οὐκ ἄγαλμα
 οὐδὲ εἰκόνα, ἀλλὰ αὐτό· ἃ δὴ γίνεται δευτέρα θεάματα.
 τὸ δὲ ἴσως ἦν οὐ θέαμα, ἀλλὰ ἄλλος τρόπος τοῦ ἰδεῖν,
 ἔκστασις καὶ ἄπλωσις καὶ ἐπίδοσις αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔφεσις
 πρὸς ἀφήν καὶ στάσις καὶ περινόησις πρὸς
 25 ἐφαρμογὴν, εἶπερ τις τὸ ἐν τῷ ἀδύτῳ θεάσεται. εἰ δ'
 ἄλλως βλέποι, οὐδὲν αὐτῷ πάρεστι. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν
 μιμήματα· καὶ τοῖς οὖν σοφοῖς τῶν προφητῶν
 αἰνιττεται, ὅπως θεὸς ἐκείνος ὁράται· σοφὸς δὲ ἱερεὺς
 τὸ αἰνίγμα συνιεὶς ἀληθινὴν ἂν ποιοῖτο ἐκεῖ γεγόμενος
 30 τοῦ ἀδύτου τὴν θεάν. καὶ μὴ γεγόμενος δὲ τὸ ἀδυτον
 τοῦτο ἀόρατόν τι χρῆμα νομίσας καὶ πηγῆν καὶ ἀρχήν,
 εἰδήσει ὡς ἀρχῇ ἀρχὴν ὁρᾷ καὶ συγγίνεται [καὶ]¹ τῷ
 ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὁμοίον. <καὶ>¹ οὐδὲν παραλιπὼν τῶν θείων

¹ transposuimus.

¹ This is the only passage in the *Enneads* where ἔκστασις (usually rather inadequately and misleadingly translated "ecstasy") is used in any context relevant to the mystical union, if with Theiler and H-S we read ἐκτάσει in VI. 7. 17. 40. Theiler would prefer, for this and other reasons, to read [ἐκ]στάσις here and delete καὶ στάσις in the next line: see *Plotinus Schriften VI (Indices)* p. 174. But even if the reading of the MSS is kept here, there is no good reason for

reason or thought, and he himself was not there, if we must even say this; but he was as if carried away or possessed by a god, in a quiet solitude and a state of calm, not turning away anywhere in his being and not busy about himself, altogether at rest and having become a kind of rest. He had no thought of beauties, but had already run up beyond beauty and gone beyond the choir of virtues, like a man who enters into the sanctuary and leaves behind the statues in the outer shrine; these become again the first things he looks at when he comes out of the sanctuary, after his contemplation within and intercourse there, not with a statue or image but with the Divine itself; they are secondary objects of contemplation. But that other, perhaps, was not a contemplation but another kind of seeing, a being out of oneself¹ and simplifying and giving oneself over and pressing towards contact and rest and a sustained thought leading to adaptation, if one is going to contemplate what is in the sanctuary. But if one looks in another way, one finds nothing. These are images; and this, therefore, is how the wise among the expositors of holy things express in riddles how that god is seen; and a wise priest who understands the riddle may make the contemplation real by entering the sanctuary; and even if he has not been there, and thinks that this sanctuary is something invisible, and the source and the principle, he will know that he sees principle by principle and that like is united with like. And he will neglect none of the divine properties which the soul can have even describing the mystical union according to Plotinus as an "ecstasy". It gives a very misleading impression of this austere and quiet mysticism.

35 ὅσα δύναται ψυχὴ ἔχειν καὶ πρὸ τῆς θεάς, τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκ
 τῆς θεάς ἀπαιτεῖ· τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν τῷ ὑπερβάντι πάντα τὸ ὄ
 ἔστι πρὸ πάντων. οὐ γὰρ δὴ εἰς τὸ πάντη μὴ ὄν ἤξει ἡ
 ψυχῆς φύσις, ἀλλὰ κάτω μὲν βᾶσα εἰς κακὸν ἤξει, καὶ
 οὕτως εἰς μὴ ὄν, οὐκ εἰς τὸ παντελὲς μὴ ὄν. τὴν ἐναντίαν
 δὲ δραμοῦσα ἤξει οὐκ εἰς ἄλλο, ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτήν, καὶ
 40 οὕτως οὐκ ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐσα <οὐκ>¹ ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἐν
 αὐτῇ· τὸ δὲ ἐν αὐτῇ μόνῃ καὶ οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἐν ἐκείνῳ·
 γίνεται γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς τις οὐκ οὐσία, ἀλλ' ἐπέκεινα
 οὐσίας ταύτης, ἣ προσομιλεῖ. εἴ τις οὖν τοῦτο αὐτὸν
 γενόμενον ἴδοι, ἔχει ὁμοίωμα ἐκείνου αὐτόν, καὶ εἰ ἀφ'
 45 αὐτοῦ μεταβαίνοι ὡς εἰκῶν πρὸς ἀρχέτυπον, τέλος ἂν
 ἔχοι τῆς πορείας. ἐκπίπτων δὲ τῆς θεάς πάλιν
 ἐγείρας ἀρετὴν τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ κατανοήσας ἑαυτὸν
 ταύταις κεκοσμημένον πάλιν κουφισθήσεται δι' ἀρετῆς
 ἐπὶ νοῦν ἰὼν καὶ σοφίαν καὶ διὰ σοφίας ἐπ' αὐτό. καὶ
 50 ἀπαλλαγὴ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τῆδε, βίος ἀνήδονος τῶν
 τῆδε, φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον.

¹ Thedinga.

¹ "Beyond substance" is the often quoted foundation-text from Plato *Republic* VI 509B9; "the end of the journey" from *Republic* VII 532E3, again in the context of the ascent to the Good.

² These last words, in the common translation "flight of the alone to the Alone", are the only words of Plotinus at all generally known and remembered. He uses the "alone to the alone" formula elsewhere in the *Enneads* when speaking of our encounter with the Good (I. 6. 7. 8; VI. 7. 34. 7). It is in fact a fairly commonplace Greek phrase, generally, but not always, in a religious context. The closest parallel to Plotinus' use of it is in Numenius fr. 2 des

before the vision, and will seek the rest from the vision; and the rest, for him who has gone beyond all, is that which is before all. For the nature of the soul will certainly not arrive at absolute non-existence, but when it goes down it will arrive at evil and in this way at non-existence, not at absolute non-existence. But if it runs the opposite way, it will arrive, not at something else but at itself, and in this way since it is not in something else it will not be in nothing, but in itself; but when it is in itself alone and not in being, it is in that; for one becomes, not substance, but "beyond substance" by this converse. If then one sees that oneself has become this, one has oneself as a likeness of that, and if one goes on from oneself, as image to original, one has reached "the end of the journey".¹ And when one falls from the vision, he wakes again the virtue in himself, and considering himself set in order and beautiful by these virtues he will again be lightened and come through virtue to Intellect and wisdom and through wisdom to that Good. This is the life of gods and of godlike and blessed men, deliverance from the things of this world, a life which takes no delight in the things of this world, escape in solitude to the solitary.²

Places (11 Leemans) 11–12 ὁμιλῆσαι τῷ ἀγαθῷ μόνῳ μόνον. See E. R. Dodds "Numenius and Ammonius" in *Les Sources de Plotin (Entretiens Hardt V)*, Vandoeuvres-Genève 1957, 16–17. It does tell us something important about the mysticism of Plotinus, but can be misleading if considered in isolation from the rest of his writing about the spiritual life and Porphyry's account of Plotinus as he knew him. See my "The Apprehension of Divinity in the Self and Cosmos in Plotinus" (*Plotinian & Christian Studies XVIII*).