

PLOTINUS

The One is not “something”

«The idea of the One is not a vision that is merely abstract, theoretical or logical, nor a position of intellectual order, it rather implies the integral presence of all the dimensions of the spirit in a consciousness knowing. Life tends towards reconquering that realm of *pax profunda* in accordance with the unequivocal aspiration of the human spirit»¹

«...but Spirit (Being) can simply see either the things that precede it or the things that belong to it or the things that from its very self proceed. The things that are within it are already pure; but even purer and simpler are the things that precede it, or more precisely, the Only that precedes it. It is, therefore, not Spirit but is anterior to Spirit. Because Spirit is already “something” that falls within the beings.

That One, on the contrary, is not “something” but is prior to every thing and is not even Being, because Being possesses, so to speak, a form, the form of Being, while That is non-formal, devoid, that is, even of spiritual form».

«Therefore, is not “something”, not quality or quantity, not Spirit, nor Soul; it is not even to be found in “movement” nor, on the other hand, “in stillness”; it is not in a “space”, it is not in a “time”; it is, instead, the solitary Ideal, entirely enclosed within itself or, rather, the Non-formal which pre-exists any ideal, which is prior to motion and prior to stillness because these values adhere to Being and make it manifold».

«But since we claim (and one may well believe it) that this Most High is everywhere and yet nowhere...»

«But the way out is denied to us above all because knowledge of Him cannot be obtained either by means of science or of thought, as in the case of the remaining objects of the Spirit, but only by means of a presence that is worth far more than science. Indeed, the Soul experiences separation from its own unity and does not remain completely one, as soon as it acquires scientific knowledge of something; science, in fact, is a logical process, but a logical process is multiplicity. Thus it departs from unity, because it has fallen into number and into multiplicity. It is therefore urgent to pass science quickly by and never deviate from our unitary being; it is necessary to abandon both science and the knowable as well as all other manifestation however beautiful, because any beauty is posterior to Him and derives from Him as the light of day totally derives from the sun. This is why of Him one cannot speak or write, as it has been said. Meanwhile we speak and write directing to Him, *to awaken from the sleep of words and into the awareness of vision*, nearly as to point out the way to those who wish to contemplate a little.

Frankly, the teaching does not extend beyond this limit, of pointing out the way and the journey; but the vision is indeed wholly a personal doing of he who resolved to contemplate»².

¹ Raphael, from *Initiation into the Philosophy of Plato*. Aurea Vidyā, New York 2005

² Plotinus, *Enneads*, VI, 9, III; V, 1, VIII; VI, 9, III; VI, 8, XVI; VI 9, IV. [Italics ours].