

External "Goods" Impact Eudaimonia

Post by "Don" of March 9, 2024 at 3:24 PM

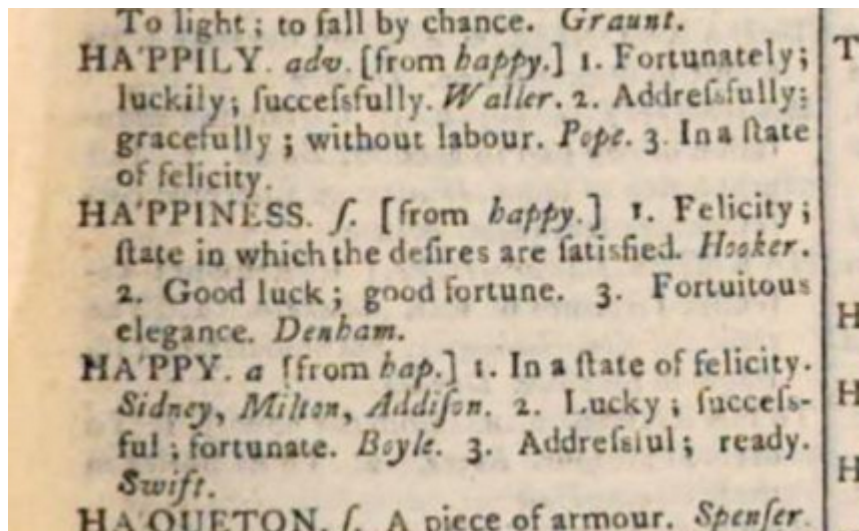
[Quote from Cassius](#)

In our discussions we aren't targeting writing a Greek dictionary, we're targeting the practical concept of "happiness," which "everyone agrees" is the goal of life.

I haven't thoroughly read all the thread (looks like a good discussion), but here's my first reaction to that statement. Fully agree we aren't writing a Greek dictionary, but...

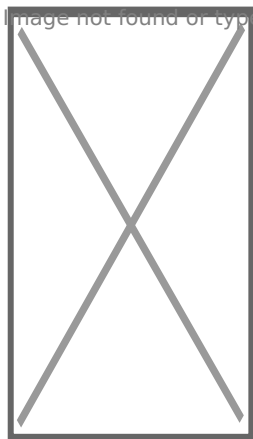
We are obligated to know what we're talking about. I would hazard that the average person thinks of "happiness" or "being happy" as a - as we've been saying - a titillation of the mind, a pleasant stimulation of the senses. If you ask someone if they're happy, I would guess that they're going to be befuddled if they're just walking down the street and get asked. "I guess so. I'm doing okay."

The fact that εὐδαιμονία is the word being referred to, it behooves us to know what is meant by that word. That's my big beef in just accepting that "it means 'happiness' and going on with the discussion (not just here but all over the internet, books, etc.). It's just taken for granted that eudaimonia = happiness, now let's use happiness. Which brings me to the Declaration of Independence's "pursuit of happiness."



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[A dictionary of the English language. Abstracted from the folio ed., by the author. To which is prefixed, an English grammar. To this ed. are added, a history of the English language \[&c.\].](#)
books.google.com

Would people nowadays equate "happiness" with "state in which the desires are satisfied"? I think most people think of happiness as being more smiling people at a dinner party, having lively conversation. "I'm so happy!"

Which brings me back to my unending soapbox blathering that I think "well-being" is a much better translation of eudamonia than "happiness." "Well-being" gets at that satisfaction aspect that I think happiness misses (maybe it's a part of it but it doesn't square up well) and that I think eudaimonia actually encompasses. One feels lucky, satisfied, living a fortuitous existence... I know we don't think much of "fortune" or "luck" but from an everperson-off-the-street stance, I continue to picket for "well-being" being the better translation of that word to which Epicurus and the Greek philosophers were pointing.

(Steps down off soap box and goes back to reading thread...)