

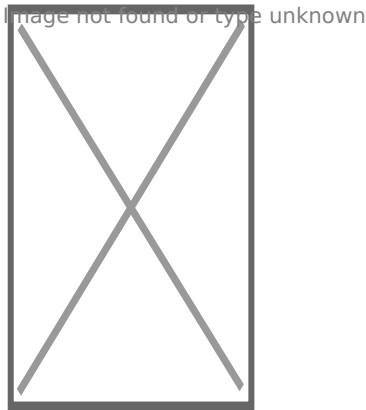
The Relationship of Happiness and Blessedness

Post by "Don" of July 9, 2026 at 11:34 AM

FWIW From my Menoikeus commentary:

μακάριον

This word is often translated as "blessed, fortunate, wealthy, 'well-off.'" There appears to be no certain etymology of the root [makar] or the longer form [makarios/on]. It appears to possibly have something to do with being wealthy, either literally or figuratively. *Taking Ancient Mythology Economically* by Morris Silver (see link below) has a very interesting section on the origins of the word. This is yet another example of the inadequacy of using one word to translate from one language to another.



[Taking Ancient Mythology Economically](#)

books.google.com

A quick digression on eudaimonia is appropriate here. εὐδαιμονία is defined by LSJ as "prosperity, good fortune, opulence; true, full happiness."

[http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?do...57%3Aentry%3Deu\)daimoni%2Fa](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?do...57%3Aentry%3Deu)daimoni%2Fa)

The word is derived from εὖ- (eu-) "well, good" + δαίμονια (daimonia) "spirit, divine power." This is where English gets the word "demon" but it could be either benevolent (eudaimon) or malevolent (kakodaimon). If you have a good, benevolent in-dwelling spirit, you will lead a prosperous, healthy, flourishing, fortunate life. Socrates claimed to be listening to his daimon for guidance which was used against him at his trial as evidence of impiety. But the term generally in common parlance means what LSJ refers to. However, it encompasses a range of qualities but is often pared down in English to simply "happiness" which is woefully inadequate. It's much more than that, encompassing that and more. Translators try to convey this with

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/5169-the-relationship-of-happiness-and-blessedness/?postID=40619#post40619>

paraphrases like "complete happiness," but our comparative translations just use "happiness." Sometimes it's left untranslated and only transliterated eudaimonia, but this is somewhat of a cheat, too. A cheat I may be guilty of shortly! If you look up that word in Merriam-Webster, it gives "well-being, happiness." So you see we can go in circles. Personally, I think "well-being" is better than "happiness" since it is almost a literal translation with a twist: eu- "well" + daimon "being" (the latter having a little double entendre). So, when you see any of those -- happiness, well-being, flourishing, eudaimonia -- remember that it's that word plus a little more. That's why I advocate using eudaimonia itself. There's a rabbit hole of papers, essays, and websites that convey the deep meaning of εὐδαιμονία if you feel intrepid.