

Happiness

Reading 12 – Aristotle

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"He who lives well is blessed and happy." —Socrates

"Long is the path that leads to happiness through words alone. But the path that leads to happiness through the practice of daily deeds is short." —Crates of Thebes

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Aristotle

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This reading comes from the Cave's
Happiness—What the Ancient Greeks Thought and Said about Happiness.

As the title indicates, this reading, after a brief introduction, presents what Aristotle thought and said about happiness, including a summary at the end.

"Aristotle was Plato's most outstanding student, surpassing all the others. . . . When he left Plato and the Academy, he selected a covered walkway in the Lyceum in which he used to walk back and forth with his students pursuing philosophical matters. This is why Aristotle and his students are called 'Peripatetics' —those who walk while teaching and learning."

—Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*

ARISTOTLE (c. 384-322 BC) WAS AN avid collector of facts. Whether spending time with a beekeeper in his apiary, or riding along with a fisherman in his boat, or observing Athenian or Macedonian politics (he lived for a time in Macedon and was tutor to the future Alexander the Great), or studying the flora and fauna of Lesbos with his colleague and friend Theophrastus, he was

always gathering information. Diogenes Laertius declares that Aristotle surpassed others in the study of nature, and that he compiled "not a few" notebooks filled with data related to the cause and reality of all things, including the smallest of things.

Born in Stagira, in present-day northern Greece, Aristotle made his way to Athens when he was about

seventeen or eighteen. There he joined Plato's Academy, where he studied for twenty years, gathering content to convert into systematic knowledge. Near the end of Plato's life, Aristotle left the Academy, venturing out on his own as a naturalist and philosopher. Though he often disagreed with his former mentor, Aristotle continued to admire and love him.

Toward the last decade of his life, Aristotle set up and taught in his own school in Athens. Since it was organized in an area dedicated as a public sanctuary and gymnasium to "Apollo Lykeios," the school came to be called the Lyceum. Many secondary schools in Europe still incorporate some version of the term into the names of their own schools today.

By the time he died, Aristotle had written a very large number of books. If we still had them all, not to mention his many notebooks, they would fill a whole bookshelf. Diogenes Laertius claims that his writings added up to some 445,270 lines, which amounts to something like 3 million words and so about 40 or 50 books. The books—now mostly lost, though we still have their titles—covered a plethora of subjects including love, wealth, prayer, pleasure, beauty, music, education, plants, kingship, household management, dramatic victors at various Dionysian festivals, and athletic victors at the Olympic and Pythian games. Most significant are those works still extant concerned with logic, physics, metaphysics, ethics, politics, poetics, rhetoric, zoology, and more.

In a way, all of Aristotle's collecting, classifying, and systemizing is not surprising. After all, he believed that such activity—study and contemplation—was the highest kind of activity for a human being. In fact, as we will see, Aristotle identified such activity with happiness itself.

Before turning to his thoughts about happiness, though, let's briefly note that Aristotle's writing is significantly different from Plato's and Xenophon's. Scholars tell us that we only possess what amounts to his lecture notes. As such, his works can be rather dry. The speaker is Aristotle himself, whose primary activity is to think through whatever problem he's hoping to address step by step. Fortunately, if we're willing to endure the slow pace, then one ponderous step usually

and logically leads to others that end in a worthwhile conclusion—in this case, a conclusion that reveals something more about happiness.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

In his most significant work on ethics, the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle begins by exploring what it is we humans act for.¹ Depending on the activity, he observes, there are many ends or goals we seek to accomplish and many goods we hope to attain. Still, what is the highest goal or good we live and act for? Most people, he says, call it "happiness." Even so, everyone disagrees about what happiness is. Consequently, Aristotle steps back to further investigate the notion of the highest goal or good. Doing so, he discovers that the highest goal or good is final, which means that it is chosen for itself rather than as a means to other goals or goods. As such, it is sufficient in itself. Such a thing, Aristotle concludes, is happiness.

Every art and every methodical investigation, and, similarly, every act and moral choice, seem to aim at some good. Consequently, the notion that "everything aims at the good" is well proven.²

If then, our every act has some end or goal that we desire for its own sake, . . . then clearly this must be the good—indeed, it must be the best of goods. Will not the knowledge of this good have a tremendous influence on our lives? Won't this knowledge better enable us, like archers, to hit upon what is right?³

Whatever the good is, it seems as though it is different in different actions, activities, and arts—in medicine, military strategy, and the rest. What is the good of each activity and art? Is it not the end for the sake of which everything is done? In medicine, it is health. In military strategy, it is victory. In the art of building, it is, for example, a house. . . . In every activity and in every choice, the good is the end for the sake of which men do whatever they do.⁴

The highest good is evidently something final. Consequently, if there is only one final good, this will be

the one end we are seeking. But if there are many ends, then the most perfect or final of these will be the one we are looking for.

Now, we call the thing that we pursue in and for itself more final than another thing that we pursue for the sake of, or as a means to, something else. Moreover, the thing that is never chosen for the sake of something else is more final than things chosen both for themselves and for something else. Therefore, we call something “absolutely final,” or “final without qualification,” if it is always chosen for itself and not as a means to something else.

Given the above, we can conclude that happiness appears to be such an end since we always choose happiness for itself and not for the sake of something else. By contrast, we choose things like honor, pleasure, understanding, and every excellence or virtue, not only for themselves . . . but also for the sake of happiness, seeing them as the means by which we can be happy. On the other hand, no one chooses happiness for the sake of honor and the like, nor, generally speaking, for anything other than itself.

The same conclusion seems to follow from the vantage point of self-sufficiency since the final good appears to be an independent or self-sufficient thing. . . . Now, we define “self-sufficient” as that which, when known or experienced alone, makes life desirable and lacking in nothing. This is the kind of thing we judge happiness to be.

Moreover, happiness is the most desirable and choiceworthy of all things.⁵

Since all knowledge and moral choice aims at good of one kind or another, . . . *the question is this*: what is the highest good that action can achieve? As for its name, nearly everyone is agreed—for both the crowd of men and the few who are educated and refined call it happiness, and they assume that “living well” and “doing well” is the same thing as “being happy.”

But they argue about what happiness is. The account given by the many is not the same as that given by the wise. Most people associate happiness with obvious things that can be seen and felt, such as pleasure or wealth or honor. . . . But quite often the

same man declares happiness one thing and then another—health when he is sick and wealth when he is poor.⁶

Aristotle further seeks to understand what the highest goal or good is for humans by investigating “man’s proper function.” In this way, he is like Plato (and Socrates) in associating the goal or good of human existence with human nature and its various functions. He concludes that proper human function is “an activity of the soul in accord with reason.” This rational soul activity is itself excellent or virtuous. Therefore, he concludes, “happiness is an activity of the soul that accords with perfect virtue.”

To call happiness the highest good is perhaps to speak in terms of clichés. Therefore, what we need is a clearer account of what, exactly, happiness is. It is possible we will be able to do this when we have grasped man’s proper function [*wherein the human good is found*].⁷ . . .

What can this function possibly be? Can it be living itself? No, life and the act of living is clearly something that men have in common with plants—and what we are seeking is something that mankind alone does. Let us therefore eliminate the life-act of nutrition and growth. The next possibility is sense perception, that is, some form of perceptive living or life. But this form of living also seems to be something common to horses, oxen, and every other animal.

There remains, then, a kind of active or practical life that follows reason or some rational principle. . . . Therefore, man’s proper function is an activity of the soul in accord with reason—at the very least not independent of reason. [*Thus, to function well in accord with reason is to function well as a human being—excellently or virtuously.*] . . .

The function of an excellent man, therefore, is to perform these activities well and finely. . . . The human good, then, is the activity of the soul that accords with virtue. And if there happens to be more than one human virtue, then it is that activity which accords with the best and most complete or perfect virtue.⁸

Happiness is an activity of the soul that accords with

perfect virtue. Accordingly, we must now consider the nature of virtue. . . .

Now the kind of virtue we must study is human virtue, and the happiness we must discover is human happiness. By human virtue, we are not referring to virtue of the body but to that of the soul. So it is that we define happiness as an activity of the soul.⁹

If, as Aristotle concludes, the highest human good is happiness, and happiness is an excellent or virtuous activity of the soul that accords with reason, then we must next grasp Aristotle's understanding of the soul—its parts and their corresponding virtues. The following sketch presents his views in summary form.¹⁰ Afterward, and letting Aristotle speak for himself, we will explore in greater detail what he calls the moral or ethical virtues and the intellectual or thinking virtues.

Aristotle taught that the soul has two major parts, the rational and the non-rational part. (By the way, he left aside the question of whether these parts are real. At the very least, he judged, they are real in terms of function and activity.) The rational part itself has two parts or aspects with corresponding virtues. One is reason itself, which knows for the sake of knowing. Its general virtue is theoretical wisdom (*sophia*) (philosophical or intellectual wisdom), whereby we understand truth or what is—that is, the necessary and universal truth of things and that which follows from this truth. The other part shares in reason by listening to it. It knows for the sake of guiding and acting. Its virtue is practical wisdom (or prudence) (*phronēsis*), the ability to deliberate well about and thus apprehend how best to act toward an end or goal. Other virtues corresponding to the rational part include scientific knowledge (*epistēmē*), which has to do with the understanding and demonstration of truth; art or applied science or skillful knowledge (*technē*), which is the ability to produce things; and intelligence (*nous*), which apprehends fundamental principles.

As for the other part of the soul, the non-rational, it also has two parts or aspects. One is the appetitive or desiring part, the part that feels desire or aversion. It may or may not participate in reason—that is, it may or may not listen to and obey reason. This part has a number of moral or ethical virtues, including courage, moderation, justice, generosity,

magnificence, magnanimity, gentleness, truthfulness, wit-tiness, friendliness, and proper shame. The other is the nutritive, or vegetative (plantlike), part. It has no virtue in itself since it operates automatically, having no part in reason.

Now that we've seen the general nature of the soul in terms of its parts and virtues, let's take a closer look at virtue itself and the soul's virtues.

Regarding virtue itself, Aristotle concludes that there are two general kinds.

So then, there are two kinds of virtue—intellectual or thinking virtue and moral or ethical virtue.¹¹

Let's first turn to the moral or ethical virtues and a summary definition. Aristotle offers the following digest of the general nature of moral virtue—a summary that will make more and more sense as we proceed.

We have now discussed the common properties of the [moral] virtues. We've looked at an outline of their general nature—that they are means that fall between two extremes, and that they are habits, which is to say a trained ability or disposition. Further, we've shown that the virtues render us apt to do the same actions as those by which they are produced, and to do them in a manner commanded by right reason, and that the virtues depend on us and are voluntary.¹²

The next question has to do with how a person becomes virtuous—and thus, keep in mind, happy. Aristotle explains that we acquire the moral virtues by means of training, habituation, and doing what is morally excellent. Acts of virtue lead to further acts of virtue, which ultimately result in the habit of being virtuous, the possession of a virtuous disposition. Therefore, it is important for children to grow up practicing virtue and for city-states to enact legislation promoting it.

Moral or ethical virtue is born thanks to habit, which is to say customary behavior. In fact, moral virtue gets its name, with a slight variation of form, from that word.¹³

The [moral] virtues are engendered in us neither by

nature nor yet in a way contrary to nature. Rather, nature disposes us to receive them, perfecting them by means of habit.¹⁴

We acquire the [moral] virtues . . . by doing them, by putting them into action, just as we do with the various arts or skills. For we learn an art or skill by doing that which we wish to do when we have learned it. We become builders by building and harpers by harping. And so, by doing just acts we become just, and by doing acts of moderation and courage we become moderate and courageous. This conclusion is confirmed, as well, by what occurs in city-states. Those who craft the laws make the citizens good by means of accustomization or habituation, that is, by getting used to good habits. This is the purpose of all legislators, and if they don't do this well, then they miss the mark. Indeed, this is what distinguishes a good from a bad constitution.¹⁵

In a word, moral habits or dispositions are formed as a result of similar activities or actions. So it is that we should control the nature of our activities since the quality of our habits depends on the quality of these. Consequently, it is no small thing whether, from when we are young, we are trained up in one habit or another; rather, it is a great difference—in fact, all the difference.

So then, unlike other branches of study, our present inquiry does not merely have a speculative aim. We are not looking into the nature of virtue only to know what it is. On the contrary, we are doing so in order to become good. Otherwise, the whole enterprise would be without an advantage.¹⁶

Returning to the “summary definition” cited a moment ago, including the fact that moral virtue is a “mean that falls between two extremes,” let’s look at what this “mean” is. Generally speaking, the mean between two extremes produces, increases, and preserves moral habits (virtues). By contrast, whatever is extreme, that is, any deficiency or excess, degrades and ultimately destroys them.

Let us observe that moral habits are such that both

deficiency and excess destroy them. To illustrate what we cannot see by what we can see, this is clear in the case of strength and health. Too much and too little exercise alike destroy strength. Similarly, to take too much or too little food and drink is ruinous to health. By contrast, an appropriate amount, that is, one of due measure, produces and increases and preserves them. The same holds true for moderation and courage and the other virtues. The man who runs away from everything in fear, and never makes a stand or endures anything, becomes a coward, while the man who fears nothing at all but marches on toward everything is overly bold, rash. Similarly, the man who enjoys every pleasure and abstains from none is undisciplined. So it is that moderation and courage are destroyed by whatever is excessive and whatever falls short or is deficient, whereas they are preserved by whatever is in the middle, the mean.¹⁷

How do we know where we stand relative to moral virtue? Aristotle explores how, while engaged in specific behaviors, our experience of pleasure and pain reveals who we are in terms of the virtues. Moral virtue is something that exists—or not—relative to pleasure and pain. As for happiness and pleasure, we’ll further explore their relationship in time.

The pleasure or pain that accompanies our actions may serve as a sign indicating our moral habits or dispositions. For instance, the man who abstains from bodily pleasures and rejoices in the abstinence is moderate, whereas the one weighed down by or annoyed by such an abstinence is undisciplined. More: a man is courageous who is glad to take a stand before danger or endure it—or at least it does not distress him. But the distressed man is a coward.¹⁸

Moral virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain. . . . We may propose, then, that moral virtue makes us do what is best in things that entail pleasure and pain, while moral badness, which is to say vice, has the contrary effect.¹⁹

Men become worse through pleasures and pains, that

is, either by pursuing and fleeing from the wrong pleasures and pains, or by pursuing and fleeing from them at the wrong time or in the wrong manner or in any other way of going wrong that may be distinguished. This is why some people go so far as to define the virtues as a kind of impassivity and quietude or rest. But they err in stating this absolutely instead of qualifying their definition by the addition of “right and wrong manner,” and “time,” and all the rest.²⁰

Next, Aristotle explains how virtuous acts must be done with knowledge, deliberate choice, and from a permanent disposition. In this way, they are different from the various arts or crafts or skills.

The case of the arts (or crafts or skills) is not really analogous to that of the virtues. Works of art possess wellness or excellence in themselves, so that it is enough if they are produced so that they have a certain quality of their own. But virtuous acts, that is, acts done in conformity with the virtues, are not done justly or moderately, for example, if they themselves are merely of a certain kind of act; rather, they are so only if the agent, the doer, is also in a certain condition or state. First, he must act with knowledge, knowing what he is doing. Second, he must deliberately choose the act, and choose it for its own sake. Third, the act must be the expression of a firm and unchangeable habit or disposition.²¹

Considering virtue and the various states of the soul in terms of genus or general kind, Aristotle suggests that virtue must be either an emotion (feelings such as desire, anger, fear, or joy, most of which are accompanied by pleasure or pain), or a capacity (the means by which we feel the various emotions), or a habit or disposition (by which we are well- or ill-disposed to the emotions). Of the three possibilities, he concludes that virtues are habits or dispositions.

The virtues are neither emotions nor capacities. It remains that they are habits or dispositions. So then, we have stated what virtue is in terms of its genus.²²

Aristotle further explains what it means to feel (that is,

experience emotion) or to act in an excessive or defective manner, or, by contrast, to act in accord with the mean.

Moral virtue has to do with emotions and actions in which there is the possibility of an excess and a deficiency, as well as a mean. For instance, one can feel afraid or be bold, feel desire or anger or pity, and generally experience pleasure and pain either too much or too little—not well in either case. By contrast, to feel these feelings at the right time, on the right occasion, toward the right people, for the right purpose, and in the right manner, is to feel them in the best way according to the mean—the very thing that is virtue. The same holds true for actions—there is an excess, a deficiency, and a mean.²³

In the next few selections, Aristotle briefly offers the various aspects and a more complete definition of moral virtue. Virtue is both that which allows a thing to perform its function well and a kind of perfection or excellence. It involves reasoned choice that determines the mean.

Notice the role that “a wise and sensible” person plays in bringing reason to life. Although Aristotle doesn’t explicitly say it, and despite his oftentimes tedious academic approach, his is not a dry, rational virtue that works everything out by cold logic or categorical imperative, but one founded on human beings who think and act excellently. We might even say they are heroes. But that may be going too far for Aristotle. If they are heroes, then their feet are planted firmly on the ground. Regardless, to know what is good, we must look to exemplars, to model men and women.

Every virtue has a twofold effect on the thing to which it belongs: it not only makes the thing well or good in itself, but it also allows the thing to perform its function well.²⁴

Virtue is a habit or disposition involving deliberate choice, consisting in the observance of a mean relative to us, as determined by reason, that is, as a wise and sensible man would determine it. Virtue is a mean that falls between two vices, that which is excessive and that which is deficient.²⁵

There are three dispositions: two vices, one of excess and one of defect, and one virtue that is the observance of the mean.²⁶

Aristotle observes that for some behaviors and feelings, such as adultery and shamelessness, for example, there is no mean, no excellent middle ground.

Some actions and emotions do not permit the observance of the mean. In fact, the very names of some directly imply that which is bad. Take, for example, malice, shamelessness, and envy, and, of actions, adultery, theft, and murder. All these and similar actions and emotions are judged bad in themselves—but not for their excess or deficiency. No, it is impossible to remain upright with them. Rather, in feeling or acting in such a way, one always misses the mark. Nor in their case does doing well or not depend on the circumstances—for instance, whether one commits adultery with the right woman, at the right time, and in the right manner. No, to act in any of these ways whatsoever is to miss the mark.²⁷

As for other emotions, actions, and areas of life, what we may call the field of virtue (that which the virtue is “relative to”), there is a mean that falls between the excess and the defect.

The observance of the mean relative to fear and boldness is courage. The man who is excessively fearless is not designated by any special name (such is the case with many virtues and vices). By contrast, the man who is overly bold is rash. He who is too fearful and not bold enough is a coward.

Relative to pleasures and pains, though not all of them, and less so relative to pain, the observance of the mean is moderation. The excess is immoderation or licentiousness. Though there are few who are deficient regarding the enjoyment of pleasures, and so such a condition has not been given a name, we may nevertheless call it insensibility or a lack of sensation or feeling.²⁸

In addition to courage and moderation, Aristotle catalogs

other virtues (other means), along with their fields and their vices, their excesses and defects, as follows (summarized). Relative to getting and spending money, liberality or generosity is the mean, prodigality or extravagance is the excess, and illiberality or meanness is the defect. There’s also magnificence (the mean), tastelessness or vulgarity (the excess), and stinginess (the defect).

Relative to honor and dishonor there are magnanimity and proper ambition (means), vanity and over ambition (excesses), and pusillanimity and a lack of ambition (defects).

Regarding anger, there is gentleness or mildness (the mean), irascibility (the excess), and spiritlessness or a lack of spirit (the defect).

The mean regarding self-expression is truthfulness; the excess is boastfulness; the defect is self-deprecation.

The mean, excess, and defect regarding conversation is wittiness, buffoonery, and boorishness, respectively.

Regarding social conduct, they are friendliness, obsequiousness or flattery, and quarrelsomeness.

Regarding shame, they are modesty or proper shame, shyness or bashfulness, and shamelessness.

Finally, relative to indignation, they are righteous indignation, envy, and malice or malicious enjoyment or spitefulness.²⁹

Aristotle recognizes that the mean (and so the virtue) does not always fall precisely between the excess and defect.

In some cases, the defect is more opposed to the mean. In others, it is the excess. For instance, relative to courage, the defect cowardice is more opposed to the mean than is the excess rashness or over-boldness. With moderation, the excess immoderation or licentiousness is more opposed than the defect insensibility.³⁰

Aristotle fully recognizes the challenge in knowing what the mean is and in achieving moral excellence. It is hard work. Accordingly, he offers several tips regarding how to hit the target of the mean.

Moral virtue is a mean . . . between two vices—one vice that is marked by excess and the other by defect.

It is a mean insofar as it is able to hit the midpoint amid emotions and actions. This is why it is hard work to be morally excellent. It is hard work to apprehend the middle of anything. For example, not everyone is able to find the center of a circle. Only one with knowledge can do so. So then, anyone can get angry. That's easy. . . . But to be angry . . . at the right person, and in the right amount, and at the right time—this is not easy for everyone. Rather, to do so well is rare, praiseworthy, and noble.³¹

The first rule in aiming at the mean is that we should point ourselves away from the extreme that is more opposed to the mean. . . . The second rule is that we should look into and examine the errors that we are most likely to commit. . . . Then we must drag ourselves away in the opposite direction. . . . The third rule is that we must in everything be on guard against pleasure and what is pleasant. . . . These are the things we may do that will best enable us to hit the mean.³²

According to Aristotle, one may move from what he terms "brutishness" to virtue, or moral excellence. What does such a movement on what we may call "the ladder to virtue" look like? In short, one moves from acting on irrational impulse (brutish, animal-like behavior) to moral viciousness, where one mistakes evil for good. Next one knows the good but is unable to pursue it consistently, given one's own moral weaknesses. With long practice, however, one is finally able to overcome various unhealthy desires, and so one comes to a place of moral strength. Beyond this is virtue or excellence, where the unhealthy desires vanish altogether, and good habit is the rule. In brief, the rungs on the ladder go from brutishness (the lowest rung) to moral viciousness, moral weakness, moral strength, and, finally, up to virtue.³³

Given that virtues have to do with actions, Aristotle investigates what it means for an action to be voluntary or involuntary. The question is: What makes for a voluntary or involuntary act?

An involuntary act is one that is done under compulsion or because of ignorance, whereas a voluntary act

would seem to be an act of which its beginning is in the agent himself, who knows the particular circumstances in which he is acting.³⁴

Aristotle moves on to the nature of choice, which "appears to be something voluntary," he says.³⁵ Choice is not the same as desire, passion, wish, or opinion. As for the latter, Aristotle states, "It is our choice of the good or the bad that determines who we are, not the opinions we hold."³⁶

After determining that choice is not any of the above four (desire, passion, wish, opinion), Aristotle explores the relationship between choice and deliberation, and then the nature of deliberation itself.

What, then, is the nature of choice? . . . On the one hand, it appears to be something voluntary. . . . Perhaps it is a kind of deliberation since choice involves reasoning and some process of thought. And this is indicated by the term itself, *prohairesis*, which means something taken or chosen *before* other things.³⁷

We deliberate about things that are in our control and are attainable by action.³⁸

Matters of deliberation, then, are matters in which there are rules that generally hold good, but in which the result is uncertain or there is an element of indeterminacy. In important matters, we distrust our own powers of judgment and call on others to assist us in our deliberations.³⁹

We deliberate not about ends but about means to ends. A physician does not deliberate about whether he is to heal his patient . . . ; rather, [he] takes the end for granted.⁴⁰

Choice, then, is a deliberate desire for things that are within our power. For we first deliberate, and then, having decided based on the deliberation, we desire according to the deliberation.⁴¹

Along with the many moral or ethical virtues cataloged

above (with their mean, excess, and defect), Aristotle also discusses the general nature of justice and its various kinds.

It is clear that the law-abiding man and the fair man are both just. “The just man or thing,” therefore, signifies that which is lawful and that which is equal or fair.⁴²

Justice that is coextensive with the whole of virtue is the practice of virtue in general toward another.⁴³

The parts of justice include two kinds—distributive justice (concerning the distribution of honor, wealth, and the other divisible assets of the community of citizens that may be allotted to its members in equal or unequal shares), . . . and corrective justice, which offers a corrective principle in private transactions.⁴⁴

Such were Aristotle’s views regarding moral or ethical virtue. Next, we must look at what he thought about intellectual virtue.

In the first lines of Book 6 of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle recognizes that we choose the mean and avoid excess and deficiency with the help of “right reason.” The conclusion begs several points of discussion. As Aristotle states them, they are: What is the “exact definition of right reason”? and, “What is the standard that determines it?”⁴⁵

As for the latter question, the general answer is the intellectual virtues, which have to do with the rational part of the soul and its two rational faculties, “one whereby we contemplate those things whose first principles are invariable, that is, they cannot be other than they are, and one whereby we contemplate those things that allow for variation.”⁴⁶ Aristotle calls the first the “scientific faculty,” the part which is capable of knowledge. He terms the second the “calculative faculty,” the part which is endowed with reason and is practiced in calculating.

The attainment of truth is the function of both intelligent or intellectual parts of the soul. Accordingly, their respective virtues are those habits or

dispositions that will allow each to best attain the truth.⁴⁷

The virtues by which the soul achieves truth in terms of assent and denial are five in number. These are skillful knowledge (or art), scientific knowledge (or science), practical wisdom (or prudence), theoretical wisdom (or wisdom), and intelligence.⁴⁸

Let’s look at each intellectual virtue in turn—scientific knowledge, skillful knowledge, practical wisdom, intelligence, and theoretical wisdom. When we get to practical wisdom, notice the reference again to people, to the example of virtuous individuals—in this case, to a prudent person, one who possesses and practices practical wisdom.

Scientific knowledge . . . may be made clear as follows. We all suppose that a thing that we can know with scientific knowledge cannot vary, that is, it cannot be other than it is. . . . A thing known by scientific knowledge, therefore, necessarily exists. Accordingly, it is eternal . . . and thus ungenerated and incorruptible, having no beginning or end. Further, we suppose that all scientific knowledge is teachable, and so what is scientifically knowable is learnable. . . . Scientific knowledge is the habit or disposition whereby we make demonstrations or construe explanations.⁴⁹

Scientific knowledge is conviction about universal and necessary truths. And demonstrated truths and all scientific knowledge are derived from first principles (since scientific knowledge operates by means of reason). . . . First principles are apprehended by intelligence.⁵⁰

Skillful knowledge (or art) is a habit or disposition that produces or makes things by means of reason or calculation that is truthful. . . . Architectural skill, for example, is an art or skillful knowledge.⁵¹

As for practical wisdom, we may grasp it by considering the nature of those people we say have practical wisdom. Now, we suppose that those who have

practical wisdom are those who can deliberate well and nobly about those things that are good and useful for themselves. We suppose this not only relative to one area of life—for instance, to those things that are good and useful for health or strength—but relative to living well in general.⁵²

Practical wisdom is not scientific knowledge since matters of conduct (*what practical wisdom is concerned with*) allow for variation.⁵³

Practical wisdom is a truth-attaining rational habit or disposition concerned with action, that is, matters of conduct, relative to things that are good and bad for human beings. . . . This point accounts for the word “moderation,” which means “preserving practical wisdom.” Moderation does indeed preserve our conviction regarding what is good and bad. For pleasure and pain do not destroy or pervert all our convictions. For example, they do not destroy or pervert the conviction that three angles of a triangle are, or are not, together equal to two right angles. They only do so relative to those things having to do with action or matters of conduct.⁵⁴

Of the two parts of the soul that have reason, practical wisdom is the virtue of one part, namely, the one that forms opinions or judgments, since, as practical wisdom does, opinion deals with that which can vary.⁵⁵ First principles are apprehended by intelligence.⁵⁶

It is clear that theoretical wisdom (or wisdom) must be the most perfect, that is, precise, kind of knowledge. The wise man, therefore, must not only know the conclusions that follow from the first principles, but he must also know the truth about these first principles. Thus, theoretical wisdom must be a combination of intelligence and scientific knowledge—it is the crowning completion of knowledge, as it were, the knowledge of those things most valued and honored.⁵⁷

Given the skepticism and even derision of others, Aristotle explains how men such as Thales and Anaxagoras (two

early Presocratic philosophers or natural scientists) may be counted wise in terms of theoretical wisdom but not so in terms of practical wisdom. This is because theoretical wisdom is not concerned with those things that are good and useful for human beings, whereas practical wisdom is.

Practical wisdom is concerned with the affairs of men. Aristotle goes on to assert, Practical wisdom is in fact the same habit or disposition as political knowledge, though their essence, to be sure, is different.⁵⁸

As Aristotle seems to admit, there is still some question as to why practical wisdom and theoretical wisdom are useful. Nevertheless, he goes on to affirm their benefit. Each is part of happiness as the virtue of part of the soul. Consequently, each is the means by which the soul functions well and, thus, humans act well. This doing or being well is happiness.

We have stated, then, what practical wisdom and theoretical wisdom are—what each has to do with, that is, its proper sphere of activity, and that each is the virtue of a different part of the soul.

Even so, one may raise further questions about the usefulness of these two virtues. For one, since theoretical wisdom is only concerned with *what is* rather than *what is coming to be*, it contemplates none of the things that make a man happy. And even though practical wisdom does consider *what is coming to be*, or changing, varying realities, we may nevertheless ask why we need it. True, practical wisdom concerns itself with just, noble, and good things for a man. But these are the things that a good man *does*. Therefore, since the virtues are habits or dispositions, we are no more able to act in such a manner simply because we know about them—just as we are not actually healthy and well simply because we know about such things. . . .

First, let us say that, even *if* neither one of them produces anything, theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom are necessarily desirable and choiceworthy in themselves because they are virtues corresponding to different parts of the soul. Second, in point of fact they *do* produce something. They do so not as the art of medicine produces health, however, but as health

itself produces health. In this way, theoretical wisdom produces happiness since theoretical wisdom is part of virtue as a whole, and so it makes a man happy by being possessed and by actualizing itself. Third, a man performs his proper function, or brings his work to completion, by means of both practical wisdom and moral or ethical virtue. This is so because moral virtue makes us aim at the right target, and practical wisdom makes us hit it by choosing the right means.⁵⁹

Finally, friendship. As it was for many ancient philosophers, for Aristotle friendship is indispensable for a good life and happiness. As such it is a virtue—at least closely related to virtue.

Friendship is a virtue—or involves virtue. Moreover, it is one of the most indispensable requirements of life, for no one would choose to live without friends.⁶⁰

We've now investigated virtue with Aristotle, and so we've grasped virtue's relationship to happiness, that "happiness is an activity of the soul that accords with perfect virtue."

Let's turn now to pleasure. How does pleasure fit in with Aristotle's view of happiness?

According to Aristotle, pleasure completes an activity, perfecting and giving it a kind of fullness. Consequently, it is possible to judge or evaluate pleasure based on the activity it completes. Activities in turn may be judged or evaluated relative to the aspect of human nature they engage. Since the soul (its rational part) is more properly human than the body, activities engaging the soul are superior to those engaging the body.

Still, we must measure activities against the moral yardstick of goodness or badness. How can we know the difference between the two? Apart from the obvious, perhaps, Aristotle turns to the "morally good man." Such a man serves as the measure of what is truly and morally pleasurable, and what is not. For such a man, the morally pleasurable is that which is "in accord with virtue."

Pleasure completes an activity. . . . One might believe that all men desire pleasure because all men wish to live. Life is an activity, and each man is active relative

to his favorite faculties and activities. For example, the man who is musical actively listens to music. Or take the student thinking about theoretical questions. Or other activities. Now pleasure completes these various activities. As such, it completes life, which these men desire. It is with good reason, then, that they also aim at pleasure since for everyone pleasure completes life, which is desirable. . . .

The activities of thought or the understanding differ from those of the senses, . . . so that the pleasures that complete them are different. . . . The pleasures of thought or the understanding are superior to the pleasures of sensation—of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. . . .

Since activities differ relative to goodness and badness, and since some activities are choiceworthy, others are to be shunned, and still others are neutral, so too are pleasures good or bad, choiceworthy or unprofitable, or neither. Each activity has its own proper pleasure. Therefore, the pleasure proper to morally good activity is morally good, and the pleasure proper to morally bad activity is morally bad. . . .

Things that are both valuable and pleasant to a morally good man are actually valuable and pleasant. . . . A morally good man judges activity in accord with virtue the most desirable. . . . And the happy life is one that accords with virtue.⁶¹

And what about amusement or having fun? For Aristotle, amusement is "a kind of rest" from activity. Since happiness is an activity, amusement cannot, in itself, be happiness. Still, amusement is important for happiness in that it is the "rest or relaxation" that permits us to get back to the relatively serious activity that happiness is.

The happy life is a serious life spent in effort rather than a less serious life engaged in various amusements.⁶²

Amusement is a kind of rest or relaxation. We need rest because we cannot work continuously. Rest itself, then, is not an end or goal; rather, we rest for the sake of further activity. . . . In this way, Anacharsis' maxim seems right: "Play and amuse yourself in order to be serious and busy."⁶³

As mentioned, happiness is an activity. It is a goal or end in itself insofar as it is an “activity in accord with virtue,” and so we desire and choose happiness in and for itself rather than some result beyond happiness.

Happiness is not a habit or disposition. . . . Rather, happiness is an activity, . . . the kind of activity that is desired and chosen for itself rather than as a means to something else. Happiness does not lack anything, but it is self-sufficient. Now, those activities that are desirable and choiceworthy in themselves are ones that do not seek any result beyond doing the activity itself. Activity in accord with virtue appears to be this kind of activity.⁶⁴

It is better to be happy as a result of one’s own care and activity than by the gift of chance.⁶⁵

In terms of what may be called a hierarchy of happiness, the highest kind of happiness is that of contemplation. “Happiness is coextensive with contemplation.” As proof for this, Aristotle offers the life of the gods as well as other considerations. The happiness of practical wisdom and moral virtue is secondary. Finally, even though contemplation is the highest form of happiness, and the happiness corresponding to moral virtue is second, happiness nevertheless requires external goods. Therefore, happiness has to do with external goods in a tertiary way.

If happiness is an activity in accord with virtue, it is reasonable that it should accord with the highest virtue. And this activity will be the virtue of the best part of us. . . . It is the activity of the rational part of us—whether we call it the mind or intellect or by some other name—in accord with its own proper virtue that will be perfect happiness. . . . As we have already stated, this activity is contemplation—which may be described as the act of observing and knowing what is with no practical goal in view.⁶⁶

The following considerations will show that happiness is a contemplative activity. Above all other beings, we assume that the gods are blessed and happy. Still, what sort of activity or actions should we assign

to them? Acts of justice? But won’t the gods seem absurd in making contracts or returning deposits, and so on? What about acts of courage, then, such as standing up to fear and taking risks because it is noble to do so? Or what about generosity and other acts of liberality? But to whom will they give? And it will be odd if the gods have money or anything like that. And acts of moderation and self-control? But such praise is vulgar since they have no low-ranking desires. If we went through every possible action we would find that they would seem trivial and unworthy of the gods.

Still, everyone supposes that the gods live and that they are therefore active in some way. . . . Now, if we take action away from a living being, as well as production, what is left but contemplation? Therefore, the operation of the god that surpasses all others in blessedness must be contemplative.

As for human activity, the activity that is most similar to this divine activity of contemplation must be essential to happiness. The point is also indicated by the fact that other animals have no share in happiness since they are completely deprived of such contemplative activity. While the whole life of the gods is blessed, and also the life of men inasmuch as the likeness of such an activity belongs to them, no other animal is happy since they do not share in the act of contemplation.

In conclusion, we can say that happiness is coextensive with contemplation—where there is contemplation, there is happiness. The more one is able to engage in contemplation, the more one is happy—not as something extrinsic to contemplation but as something intrinsic to it since contemplation is valuable in itself. Happiness, therefore, is some kind of contemplation.⁶⁷

In comparison with contemplation, the life of moral virtue is happy in a secondary way since its activities are human activities. For we engage in justice and courage and other virtuous acts in relation to other human beings, observing our respective duties relative to contracts and services and many other actions having to do with the passions. And all of these appear to be typically human.⁶⁸

Being a human being, one will also need external goods and advantages since our nature is not self-sufficient for the purpose of contemplation. Instead, our body must also be healthy. Further, it must have food and other attention. Nevertheless, we must not imagine that the happy man will require many or great things.⁶⁹

Some believe that the happy man will not need friends. They say that those who are supremely happy and self-sufficient have no need for friends. . . . Nevertheless, it seems strange to ascribe every good thing to the happy man but then to leave out friends, who are thought to be the greatest of all external goods.⁷⁰

We finish with the biographer Diogenes Laertius' summary of Aristotle's beliefs about the goal of life and happiness. Note the same hierarchy of happiness as that which is presented by Aristotle himself.

Diogenes Laertius Aristotle held that the exercise of virtue in a completed life is the goal of life. He said that happiness is made up of three categories of goods. First are those goods of the soul, which, in fact, he calls the primary goods because of their power. Second are those goods of the body—health, strength, beauty, and similar things. Third are external goods—wealth, good birth, reputation, and the like. Moreover, he regarded virtue as not of itself sufficient to ensure happiness. Rather, bodily and external goods are also necessary.⁷¹

Diogenes Laertius Of the three kinds of life, the contemplative, the practical, and the pleasure-loving life, Aristotle preferred the contemplative life.⁷²

SUMMARY OF HAPPINESS FOR ARISTOTLE

For Aristotle, happiness is the final goal or good that humans act for, the one that is chosen for itself rather than the means to some other goal or good. This goal or good is itself an ongoing act. It is “an activity of the soul in accord with reason,” which is “man’s proper function.” But such an activity must be excellent or

virtuous. Therefore, “the happy life is one that accords with virtue,” with excellent activity.

There are two general kinds of virtue, each corresponding to different parts of the human soul. They are the moral or ethical virtues and the intellectual or thinking virtues.

The moral virtues exist relative to what we humans do. In general, they enable humans to perform human functions well relative to themselves and others, in the right manner, at the right time, and in the right place. More specifically, virtues are neither emotions nor capacities.⁷³ Rather, they are habits (trained abilities or dispositions) that are cultivated and established by means of acting—by doing acts of one virtue or another until we finally possess the habit or disposition.⁷⁴ Our habits (virtues) are revealed by “the pleasure or pain that accompanies our actions.” Virtue helps us to do well, “what is best,” relative to “things that entail pleasure and pain.”

Each moral virtue is a mean that falls between two extremes, the excess and defect. For example, courage is the mean that falls between rashness and cowardice. Similarly, moderation falls between immoderation or licentiousness and insensibility or a lack of sensation or feeling.

Finally, moral virtue involves a voluntary act and choice. As such, and given the indeterminate nature of human life, it involves deliberation, which is the process by which we rationally consider the means by which we may achieve some goal or hit some target that is “in our control” and “attainable by action.” We deliberate and therefore choose the mean and avoid the excess and deficiency with the help of right reason.

This brings us to the intellectual virtues. The intellectual virtue that primarily helps us deliberate and choose well is practical wisdom, which is “a truth-attaining rational habit concerned with action relative to things that are good and bad for human beings.” Other intellectual virtues are scientific knowledge, skillful knowledge, intelligence, and theoretical wisdom.

Returning to “the happy life,” which is a life “that accords with virtue,” Aristotle holds that there are different levels of happiness. The highest happiness

corresponds to the highest activity, which in turn engages the highest part of human nature, the rational part of the soul. This activity is contemplation. Next down is the happiness of human activity, such as living wisely, moderately, courageously, or justly. Although this sort of activity participates in and is directed by reason, it is nevertheless oftentimes aimed at goals or goods that have no direct relation to the activity of contemplation. As such, it is inferior to contemplation but excellent in that it participates in reason. Finally, there is the happiness of external goods, things that are necessary to support the life of the body and, therefore, the life of the mind.

As for pleasure, something that many associate

with happiness itself (see, for instance, Aristippus of Cyrene or Epicurus in the following chapters), it is only good or happy insofar as it completes a superior human activity, such as contemplation or behaving with magnanimity. We must ultimately look to the example of excellent human beings, those who are morally good, to know what is superior and what is inferior.

Finally, amusement or having fun is not happiness because it is not the final goal or good that humans shoot for. Rather, amusement is simply giving serious activity a break so that we may get back to the same. As such, it plays a role in happiness, but it is not happiness itself.

So ends Reading 12. **See you in Reading 13, “Aristippus of Cyrene & Cyrenaicism.”**

NOTES

¹ For the following points regarding the scope of ethics and what kind of person benefits most from studying ethics, see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.3.1-7 (1094b-1095a). First, the scope of ethics. It is important to note that, for Aristotle, moral philosophy or ethics is not an exact science or kind of knowledge. We should not expect the same level of precision as we would expect in, say, a mathematical investigation. Aristotle’s goal, therefore, is to present “a broad outline of the truth” in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Given the various topics involving broad notions and generalities (for instance, the goal of human action and life, the good, happiness, and the like), he says that “it is enough if we come to generally valid conclusions.” This “enough,” Aristotle judges, is sufficient for those who have been educated, for “it is the mark of an educated person to look for precision in each kind of thing only so far as the nature of the particular topic allows.” This point leads us to the kind of person that benefits most from studying ethics. The educated person is one who has received an “all-around education.” Such a person has experience relative to life and human action. For Aristotle, this bars most—if not all—young people from engaging in serious moral philosophy or ethics since, given their young age, they have neither received an all-around education, nor do they have sufficient experience relative to life and human action. Moreover, he declares, young people often live more according to their feelings or passions than they do from rational principles. But then again, he observes, many who are not young also do so. Take those who “lack self-control.” Therefore, whether young or old, the key is to live according to the knowledge one has.

² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.1.1 (1094a).

³ Ibid., 1.2.1-3 (1094a). The Greek behind “end or goal” is *telos*, a term that, in this context, may also be given as “target” or “purpose.” In the broadest sense, *telos* is “the fulfillment or completion of anything.”

Otherwise, for Aristotle, “the knowledge of this good” is closely tied to the science or knowledge of politics—that is, knowledge having to do with the city-state (*polis*) and “the human good” of everyone within the city-state. Significantly, this is a communal or city-wide good since, as Aristotle puts it, “the good of the city-state is manifestly more important and more perfect” than “the good of one person,” even though “the good in both cases is the same.”

⁴ Ibid., 1.7.1 (1097a).

⁵ Ibid., 1.7.3-8 (1097a-1097b).

⁶ Ibid., 1.4.2-3 (1095a).

⁷ Aristotle goes on to say that “the good of man is associated with the function of man.” He assumes that humans have some “natural” general function beyond specific functions such as those governing our eyes (seeing), hands (grasping), feet (walking), and so on. This general function is “unique” to humans. For Aristotle, as we will see, this function is the active exercise of reason.

⁸ Ibid., 1.7.9-16 (1097b-1098a). In the interest of space, we have slightly changed the language of Aristotle to be more declarative (it is) than conditional (if . . .). That said, be assured that the declarative points are Aristotle’s.

To better grasp *aretē*, the Greek term behind “virtue,” see the Cave’s *Aretē: Excellence or Virtue—What the Ancient Greeks Thought and Said about Aretē*. Given the tie, in Aristotle’s mind, of happiness to virtue, much of the following content relating Aristotle’s view of virtue comes from *Aretē: Excellence or Virtue*.

⁹ Ibid., 1.13.1, 5-6 (1102a). For Aristotle, soul goods are the best of goods: “Good things are commonly divided into three groups,” he says. “Some are given as ‘external goods.’ Others are related to the soul or the body. We call those things belonging to the soul most properly and truly goods.” See *ibid.*, 1.8.2 (1098b).

¹⁰ The sketch itself is derived from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. For more on Aristotle’s understanding of the soul, see his *On the Soul*.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1.1 (1103a). The Greek for “intellectual or thinking” is *dianoētikos*, and for “moral or ethical” it is *ēthikos*. The “or” should not be read as *either* one or the other, for instance, moral or ethical; rather, the two terms are, in this case, equivalent—that is, one can translate *ēthikos* with both words. So it goes with “intellectual or thinking” and *dianoētikos*.

¹² Ibid., 3.5.21 (1114b).

¹³ Ibid., 2.1.1 (1103a). The Greek term *ēthikos* (ethical) is related to the Greek term *ēthos* (custom, usage, manner; disposition, character, habit). The term “moral” similarly comes from the Latin *mōs* (custom, manner; character; habit). In some forms of *mōs*, the root is *mōr-* (as in the genitive, *mōris*).

¹⁴ Ibid., 2.1.3 (1103a).

¹⁵ Ibid., 2.1.4-5 (1103a-b).

¹⁶ Ibid., 2.1.7-2.2.1 (1103b). Having said all this, Aristotle observes the complicated nature of discussing moral virtue—excellence having to do with conduct. Any such discussion must necessarily be a sketch, an outline, offering generalities rather than specifics, what is more-than-likely rather than certain. “Let it be understood that all reasoning relative to matters of practice, of conduct, must merely be offered in the form of an outline rather than with any precision. For, as we said at the beginning, we should realize that the kind of reasoning used in any inquiry will vary according to the subject. Accordingly, there is nothing fixed or invariable about practical matters and questions of expediency—any more than with matters of health. And if our general conclusions are inexact in this way, still more will be our reasoning about particular cases. For these fall under no established skill or art or set of rules or precepts. Instead, the one acting, the agent, must always consider for himself what the specific occasion demands, just as with medicine and navigation.” Ibid., 2.2.3-4 (1104a).

¹⁷ Ibid., 2.2.6-7 (1104a).

¹⁸ Ibid., 2.3.1 (1104b).

¹⁹ Ibid., 2.3.6 (1104b).

²⁰ Ibid., 2.3.5 (1104b).

²¹ Ibid., 2.4.3 (1105a).

²² Ibid., 2.5.6 (1106a). “Habit or disposition” is *hexis* (a possession; a permanent state or condition; a trained habit or skill).

²³ Ibid., 2.6.10-12 (1106b).

²⁴ Ibid., 2.6.2 (1106b).

²⁵ Ibid., 2.6.15-16 (1106b-1107a).

²⁶ Ibid., 2.8.1 (1108b).

²⁷ Ibid., 2.6.18 (1107a). Again, keep in mind that “Happiness is an activity of the soul that accords with perfect virtue.” Therefore, the very fact that the “actions and emotions” mentioned in this selection “do not permit the observance of the mean” signifies that such “missing the mark” is not only vicious but also that people feeling and acting in such a way are not happy. To state it plainly, according to Aristotle, those who feel “malice, shamelessness, and envy” and those who engage in “adultery, theft, and murder” *cannot* be happy.

²⁸ Ibid., 2.7.2-3 (1107b).

²⁹ For Aristotle’s rather brief discussion of these virtues, see *ibid.*, 2.7.4-15 (1107b-1108b). For his detailed discussion, see 3.5.23-4.9.8 (1115a-1128b).

³⁰ Ibid., 2.8.6 (1109a).

³¹ Ibid., 2.9.1-2 (1109a).

³² Ibid., 2.9.3-7 (1109a-b).

³³ For Aristotle’s discussion of these rungs or states, see *ibid.*, 7.1-10. For an image of the ladder and a description of each rung, see the Cave’s *Aretē: Excellence or Virtue—What the Ancient Greeks Thought and Said about Aretē*.

³⁴ Ibid., 3.1.20 (1111a).

- ³⁵ Ibid., 3.2.1, 2 (1111b).
- ³⁶ Ibid., 3.2.11 (1112a).
- ³⁷ Ibid., 3.2.16-17 (1112a).
- ³⁸ Ibid., 3.3.6 (1112a).
- ³⁹ Ibid., 3.3.10 (1112b).
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 3.3.11 (1112b).
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 3.3.19 (1113a).
- ⁴² Ibid., 5.1.8 (1129a).
- ⁴³ Ibid., 5.2.10 (1130b).
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 5.2.12 (1130b-1131a).
- ⁴⁵ For the general conclusion and two points of discussion, see *ibid.*, 6.1.1, 3 (1138b).
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 6.1.5 (1139a).
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 6.2.6 (1139b).
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 6.3.1 (1139b). The parenthetical “or” simply points to another word that may be used to translate the Greek, which is, respectively, *technē*, *epistēmē*, *phronēsis*, *sophia*, and *nous*.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 6.3.2-4 (1139b).
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 6.6.1-2 (1140b-1141a).
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 6.4.3 (1140a). The post-ellipsis part is actually prior to the first part in Aristotle’s text, but since it is an illustration of *technē*, we have placed it second.
- ⁵² Ibid., 6.5.1 (1140a).
- ⁵³ Ibid., 6.5.3 (1140b). The italicized material in parentheses is explanatory (not Aristotle’s).
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 6.5.4-6 (1140b). Aristotle seems to combine the words *sōzein* (to save, preserve) and *phronēsis* (practical wisdom) to get *sōphrosunē* (moderation). Hence, his remark, “This point accounts for the word ‘moderation,’ which means ‘preserving practical wisdom.’”
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 6.5.8 (1140b).
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 6.6.2 (1141a).
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., 6.6.2-3 (1141a). Aristotle again makes the last point a few lines later.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., 6.7.6, 6.8.1 (1141b).
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 6.11.7-6.12.1, 6.12.4-6 (1143b, 1144a).
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 8.1.1 (1155a).
- ⁶¹ Ibid., parts from 10.4.8-10.6.6 (1174b-1177a). “Completes” (from *teleō* or *teleioō*) can also be given as “fulfills” or “perfects.” Otherwise, compare the “morally good man” to the “wise and sensible man” in *ibid.*, 2.6.15 (1107a) cited above.
- ⁶² Ibid., 10.6.6-7 (1177a).
- ⁶³ Ibid., 10.6.6 (1176b-1177a). For the Scythian Anacharsis, see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 1.101-105.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 10.6.2-3 (1176a-1176b).
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., 1.9.5 (1099b).
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 10.7.1 (1177a).
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 10.8.7-8 (1178b). “Contemplation” is *theōria* (the act of seeing, viewing, beholding, inspecting; consideration).
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., 10.8.1 (1178a).
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., 10.8.9 (1178b-1179a).
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., 9.9.1-2 (1169b).
- ⁷¹ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 5.30.
- ⁷² Ibid., 5.31.
- ⁷³ To expand the point: Happiness is neither a feeling (emotion) nor the capacity for a feeling (emotion); rather, happiness is an activity in accord with the habit-disposition (virtue) that enables us to do well relative to our feelings (emotions).
- ⁷⁴ As such, although Aristotle does not explicitly make the point, we may distinguish between “acts of virtue” and “virtuous acts” — the former being an act independent of one’s ongoing disposition (or habits) and the latter stemming from one’s ongoing disposition (or habits). For instance, one may perform an act of courage while nevertheless generally being a coward, or one may perform a courageous act due to one’s ongoing, habitual courage. Thanks to Dr. Mark Lowery, late professor at the University of Dallas, for this distinction (in the context of Thomas Aquinas on the virtues).

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"He who lives well is blessed and happy." —Socrates

"Long is the path that leads to happiness through words alone. But the path that leads to happiness through the practice of daily deeds is short." —Crates of Thebes

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