CHAPTER-3

CONCEPT OF GOOD LIFE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ARISTOTLE

Good life is a moral concept. So it is not possible to describe it without the analysis of Ethical theory. Aristotle’s concept of good life can be found in the thorough study of his ethical theory described in *Nicomachean Ethics* which is teleological in nature. There he considered the nature of desire to achieve happiness, described the operation of human volition and moral deliberation, developed a theory of each virtue as the mean between vicious extremes, discussed the value of three kinds of friendship and defended his conception of an ideal life of intellectual pursuit. In his ethics, Aristotle seeks to define the guidelines for human beings to achieve happiness as a community. Aristotle declares that all human life consists of activity. He further claims that human beings engage in these activities to arrive at some end and this end to be good because otherwise we would not partake in the endeavour. Aristotle maintains that there are two types of ends—an end in itself and the other end that is subordinate to some other activity. An end in itself, the most complete end, is considered to be better than a subordinate end. Aristotle then declares that the most complete end that all activity aims at is happiness, although most people disagree about what exactly happiness is. Ethics, for Aristotle means the cultivation of habit of the soul, it is a disposition towards the passions that is conducive to virtuous action. Ethics is not the same as morality or right conduct. In ethical theory Aristotle discusses the condition under which moral responsibility may be ascribed to individual agents, the nature of virtues and vices involved in moral evaluation, and the method of achieving happiness in human life. The central issue for Aristotle is the
question of character or personality — ‘what does it take for an individual human being to be a good person’? He applies his idea of moderation, the golden mean in an attempt to discover the constituents of good life and the good man.

Aristotle’s good life involves a comprehensive treatment of the question “how should we live?” This question reflects the primacy of character, traits of individuals in Aristotle’s virtue ethics. His virtue ethics is mainly based on the rational account of a good human life and identifies good human life with virtuous life and virtue is conceived as human excellence. The good life therefore is the life of excellence. For Aristotle, the attainment of good life is the main purpose of human existence. He has an intellectualist conception of man’s end. In his ethics there is not any close counterpart to Christian grace and there are no theological virtues in his moral psychology and conception of the soul. He developed a virtue centered ‘eudaemonism’, a theory in which human flourishing and the virtuous activities required for it are the central concerns. He argued that there is an intrinsic end, proper human nature, namely eudaemonia i.e. happiness and that it is fundamentally granted in rational activity. That includes both deliberative, practical activity and theoretical activity, intellectual activity for its own sake. Happiness is interpreted in terms of virtuous activity and thereby connected to the excellences proper to a being with rational nature. He argued that there are excellent activities that are pleasing because they are good rather than the other way round and that a life shaped by these activities is a happy life. Actually it is eudaemonia in Aristotle’s language which is usually translated as happiness for human flourishing.

In the analysis of his treatment of human life, Aristotle is mainly influenced by Greek cultures and Greek customs. So it is not very easy to disentangle the
Aristotelian method and attitude from the Greek culture. Aristotle is interested in understanding life as it is and will be, rather than in the radical remolding of life. He observed man’s life from the realistic and empirical standpoint. The very core of Aristotelian attitude towards the conduct of man’s life is this insistence that we must start with what we find at hand and perfect the tendencies that are actually there. His concept of good life can be regarded as the politico-ethical life. He says that politics makes the way for the good life of the citizens because it provides moral motivation in the form of connection between happiness and virtue. One of the main points of Aristotle's moral philosophy is that ethics cannot be codified and he also believes that there is no single criterion of right action. The central point of his moral philosophy is that of the notion of a flourishing or worthwhile life or good life, shaped by sound habituation and well ordered self determination. His ethics can be regarded as a kind of naturalism due to the fact that the proper end of human being is intrinsic to human nature and way of realizing it is also intrinsic in nature.

Aristotle gives a fine analysis of the good life, of the moral and intellectual virtues which is more complete and systematic than that of Plato's analysis. Because, he replaced the transcendental values of Plato by the immanent forms. For Aristotle, moral law is devoid of any real transcendental foundation, in regard to both content and form. But Plato accepted that moral law has a transcendental basis. According to Aristotle, the good life is reflected in the right choices and good actions. According to Aristotle the basic moral principle 'good' is immanent in activities of our daily lives and can be discovered only through the study of them. In this respect we find a distinction between Plato and Aristotle. Because, according to Plato 'good' is independent of experience, personality and circumstances. There are different types of
goods corresponding to different art or sciences. Aristotle, by empirical investigation remarks that every activity has a final cause, the good at which it aims. So like the predecessor he says that good is that at which all things aim. He says, “Every art and every enquiry and similarly every action and pursuit is thought to aim at some good, and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim”.¹ But there are many aims, some goods are desired for its own sake and some for the sake of others. Aristotle argues that since there cannot be an infinite regress of merely extrinsic goods, we must presuppose intrinsic goods and if one appears to be more ultimate than the other, this will be the highest good at which all human activity ultimately aims and this is the final end or chief good. He says, “Goods have been divided into three classes and some are described as external, others as relating to soul or to the body. We call those that relate to soul must properly and truly goods, and psychical actions and activities we class as relating to soul. Therefore our account must be sound, at least, according to this view which is an old one and agreed on by philosophers.”²

The chief good is final, (that which is always desirable in itself and never for the sake of something else) self-sufficient that which (even) when isolated makes life desirable and lacking in nothing. So the chief good is that which is final, because it is desired for its own sake, not for the sake of something else and self-sufficient because its achievement will leave nothing to be desired. According to Aristotle, this chief good is nothing but happiness, which is final and self-sufficient in nature and accepted by all people and good life is happy life. He remarks, “Such a thing happiness above all else, is held to be; for this we choose always for self and never for the sake of something else, but honour, pleasure, reason and every virtue we choose indeed for
themselves (for if nothing resulted from them we should still choose each of them) but we choose them also for the sake of happiness judging that by means of them we shall be happy. Happiness, on the other hand, no one chooses for the sake of these, nor in general for anything other than itself.\(^3\) Happiness is the pleasant state of mind which is brought about by the habitual doing of good deeds. So according to Aristotle, good life is the happy life. He says "happy man lives well and does well for we have practically defined happiness as a sort of good life and good action."\(^4\)

Aristotle identifies happiness with virtue, virtue belongs to virtuous activity. In Aristotle's ethics there is a connection between virtue and happiness. Happiness is derived through deliberate actions and seeking of ends guided by a correct understanding of human good. The activity is pleasing because it is caused by proper orientation of our rational capacity and since it is good, so it is pleasing. Thus a conception of well ordered human activity is the basis of living well, both in the sense of an excellent and worthwhile life. His moral theory is regarded as a form of non-consequentialism because it says that moral value of action depends upon the disposition and judgment of action rather than the consequences. There is no difference of placing happiness in possession or in use in a state of mind or in activity. The state of mind may exist without producing good result. Just as in a man who is asleep or inactive, activity cannot exist because one who has the activity will of necessity be acting and acting well. Regarding the nature of happiness Aristotle says that it is not a disposition, because it does not belong to one who was asleep throughout his life, living the life of a plant. But it is an activity because it is necessary desirable for the sake of itself. Virtuous activities are desirable in themselves and from this nothing is sought beyond the activity. Therefore happiness
is a virtuous activity. Happiness is an end, it does not lie in amusement, amusement is a sort of relaxation and we need relaxation because we cannot work continuously. It is taken for the sake of activity, but it is not an end. Virtuous action is pleasant, noble and good in highest degree. So happiness is the best, noblest and most pleasant thing in the world and these propensities belong to the best activities. So the best activities can be identified with happiness. But to be happy it is not sufficient merely to be good. It is necessary also to be blessed with a sufficiency of goods — that is, good birth, good looks, good fortune and good friends. Above all, a long and healthy life is necessary for the attainment of happiness. “One swallow does not make a summer, nor does one day”. To make a perfect summer of our life we need many days, a sufficiency of sunlight and a full measure of song.

Yet, even in a short life and in the midst of misfortune, it is possible for the noble man to be happy. For, the noble soul can cultivate an insensibility to pain and this in itself is a blessing. In other words we may sometimes attain happiness by renouncing it. Further more, no man can be called unhappy if he acts in accordance with virtue. For such a man “will never do the acts that are hateful or mean.” and happiness consists in the doing good deeds. But the completely happy man is he “who is active in accordance with complete virtue and is sufficiently equipped with wealth and health and friendship not for some chance period but throughout a complete life.” So, happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance with perfect virtue. Happiness is explained by Aristotle as the living well or the doing well. This is not the ordinary notion of pleasure, wealth and honour. Moreover, this happiness is not any philosophical theory of forms which provides an adequate account of ultimate goal because it is seen that the individual who acquire material goods or achieve
intellectual knowledge is not always happy. According to Aristotle, happiness alone answers to the description of the highest good for we always choose it for itself and never for the sake of anything else, while honor and pleasure and reason and all virtues or excellence, we choose partly indeed for themselves (for apart for any result we should choose any of them) but partly for the sake of happiness, supposing that they will help to make us happy. This happiness results from the performance of the peculiar work which belongs to man as man. Just as the excellence of the carpenter or cobbler lies in his definite function or activity. Question arises, 'what is the peculiar function of man as man'? Regarding this question it is said that the peculiar function of man or the good for man cannot be answered with the exactitude with which a mathematical problem can be answered. Because in ethics we start from the actual moral judgment of man and comparing, contrasting and shifting them, we come to the formulation of general principle. But in mathematics we start from general principles and argue to conclusion.

By applying this method Aristotle finds a conclusion in his ethical theory. Every activity of human being aims at final end i.e. good which is realizable in all circumstance necessary to them. Generally if we desire one thing for the sake of another thing, we desire that another thing for the sake of something else. Thus we find a series of desires and actions and it goes on infinite regress. If it is so, all actions and desires would be futile and purpose less, so we must stop at a certain point which is called the ultimate end or sumnum bonum of life at which all human activity aims else "we should go on and infinitum and desire would be left void and object less." and this is called by Aristotle 'Eudaemonia' which literally means happiness. Regarding the meaning of happiness there is a difference between the philosophers.
Someone says that it is the life of pleasure; other says that happiness consists in the renunciation of pleasure. But Aristotle says that happiness means the living well or doing well. So the highest good for man is the complete and habitual exercise of the function which makes him a human being. This is the meaning of *eudaemonia*. Therefore to lead a good life man as a man must do his activity habitually and completely without any exception. In this sense we can compare his views with the Gita’s view which says that to lead a life of *Sthitaprajña* man should perform his duty as duty without the detachment of consequence. Aristotle also says that if a man performs his virtuous and honorable activity as an organic unity of reason, passion and sensibility he would be able to lead a good life. Reason is the form of moral life of man and other two are the matter of moral life. Feeling is the consequence of man’s rational activity, though it is not the guide of life. So pleasure comes in his moral pursuit, but it cannot be the end of life. It is one of the means for the attainment of good life. Man’s special function is reason; sensation is the special function of animals. Man is not only rational animal but also appetitive and sensitive animal. So other than reason, appetite and passion are also the organic parts of man’s nature as a highest animal. Aristotle says, “It cannot consist in merely living for plants also live, nor in having sensations for they are shared by man with the brute creation,” it consists only in “the life of his rational nature, with its two sides or divisions, one rational as obeying reason, the other rational as having and exercising reason.”

According to Aristotle, the rational life of man can be viewed as a moral activity which indicates the exercise of these facilities “in a life of action under the control of reason”, and he says, “It makes no small difference whether the good be conceived as the mere possession of something, or as its use – as a mere habit or trained faculty, or
as the exercise of the that faculty. For the habit or faculty may be present, and yet issue in no good result, as when a man is asleep, or in any other way hindered from his function, but with its exercise this is not possible, for it must show itself in acts and in good acts. And as at the Olympic Games it is not the fairest and strongest who receive the crown, but those who contend (for among these are the victors), so in life too, the winners are those who not only have all the excellences, but manifest these in deed. From this it can be said that good life consists in rational activity which implies both virtuous and honorable activity. Since Aristotle gives more emphasis on reason he can be regarded as a rigorist like Kant. But a close analysis of his theory shows that though he gives much importance on rational activity, yet he does not ignore the claim of sensibility in moral life, because he gives equal value of pleasure with the rational activity. According to Aristotle, an action cannot be judged as good for yielding happiness, but good actions always yield happiness. Because happiness signifies moral activity. So by teleological investigation Aristotle says that good life consists in the life of reason and the life of thought and happiness is the activity of soul in accordance with virtuous activity. The life of reason and thought constitute intellectual virtue and on the other hand ethical virtue consists in the submission of passions and appetites to the control of reason. These two virtues (intellectual and ethical virtues) are the constituents of happiness. Although Aristotle places happiness in virtue he does not overlook other values and he says that external goods help man in his quest of virtue. These external goods are not goods in themselves, but these are the means of attaining virtue, riches, friends, health, good fortune are not happiness, but without these happiness cannot be attained in truest sense and he says, "for complete happiness a sufficient provision of external goods is essential, since these
are necessary for the active manifestation of virtue, just as the equipping of the chorus is necessary for the representation of a dramatic work of art.”

According to Aristotle, an agent who possesses virtue recognizes certain actions as practically and morally necessary. These actions are performed by the agents for their own sake, not on account of an independent desire or passion. While this theory is interpreted as a way, in which the theory includes the notion of categorical imperative, it is still different from Kant's conception. Because according to Kant, possession of practical reason enables any rational agent to grasp what is unconditionally required and what is required independent of desires and sensibilities? But according to Aristotle, it is only the agent in whom desire and cognition is in agreement, the agent who has a stable and correct comprehension of what is fine, just and wants to act on that basis, who sees virtue's requirement as categorically imperative. As a form of virtue centered theory, Aristotle's theory admits that the excellence of virtuous agent rather than a principle specifiable independently of an excellent agent's character, as the measure of moral soundness. It implies that in order to act well and to live well an agent must have certain states of character and intellect. A virtuous agent has correct understanding, good judgment, and deliberative excellence and follows through on what is chosen. So, virtuous activity is the central element of eudaemonia. In that sense virtues have an important connection with happiness, even though virtuous activity is not engaged in only because it is conducive to happiness rather the person who acts with a view to the just and the fine is best able to lead a life enjoyed as worthwhile and desirable for its own sake. According to Aristotle, action is not fully virtuous action unless (1) the agent acts knowingly (2) chooses the action for its own sake and (3) does so from a firm and
unchanging character. In these regards he certainly seems to include voluntariness perhaps something like will or volition in his conception of virtuous action. And his lengthy treatment of incontinence and impetuosity is a key resource in the discussion of the weakness of the will.

According to Aristotle definition of happiness cannot be fully understood until the nature of virtue has been thoroughly examined. “Virtue is a disposition or habit, involving deliberate purpose or choice, consisting in a mean that is relative to ourselves, the mean being determined by reason or as a prudent man would determine it”\(^\text{12}\). But the nature of virtue depends upon the structure of the soul which contains both rational and irrational components. Two functions fall to the rational part, the control of man’s irrational propensities and the exercise of reason for its own sake, he says, “since happiness is an activity of soul in accordance with perfect virtue, we must consider the nature of virtue.”\(^\text{13}\) The virtues corresponding to the two functions of reason are the intellectual and the moral. The wise man personifies the intellectual virtues, whereas the continent man typifies the moral virtues. The excellence of intellectual virtue is attained through the instruction and evidenced by knowledge, but the excellence of moral virtue is produced by habits of choice and expressed in practical actions tempered by both the circumstance and the individual. Aristotle says, “Virtue, then being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching, while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit.”\(^\text{14}\)

For analyzing moral virtues Aristotle analyses human personality where he finds three elements – passions, faculties and states of character. Passions, for example anger and fear are not in and of themselves blameworthy or praiseworthy. So
also the facilities, for example, the ability to feel anger and fears are not in and of themselves praiseworthy or blameworthy. Therefore virtue must be a state of character which enables a man to fulfill his proper function aim at and intermediary point between the opposite extremes of excess and deficiency. He says "we must however not only describe (moral) virtue as state of character, but also say what sort of state it is. We may remark, then, that every virtue or excellence both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well; e.g. the excellence of the eye makes both the eye and its works good; for it is by the excellence of the eye that we see well, similarly, the excellence of the horse makes a horse both good in itself and good at running and at carrying its rider and at awaiting the attack of the enemy. Therefore if this true in every case, the virtue of man will be the state of character which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well."\(^{15}\)

The morally virtuous man always chooses to act according to the 'golden mean'. The happy man, the virtuous man is he who preserves the golden mean between the two extremes of ignoble conduct. A virtuous person is a person who possesses physical prowess, technical competence and mental virtuosity. To these three qualities Aristotle adds a fourth requisite for happiness, which is moral nobility. This all round excellence therefore is needed for Aristotle's 'happy warrior' in the battlefield of life. He summarized this manifold excellence in his famous doctrine of the golden mean. In every act, in every thought, in every emotion, a man may be overdoing his duty or under doing it or doing it just right. Thus in sharing goods with other people, a man may be extravagant which is overdoing it, or stingy which is under doing it or liberal, which is doing it just right. In the matter of facing the danger
of life, a man may be foolhardy or cowardly or brave. In every case the rational way of life is to do nothing too much or too little, but to adopt a middle path. The virtuous man will be neither super normal nor subnormal, but justly and wisely normal. He will act at the right times with reference to right objects, towards the right people with the right motive and in the right way. In short, he will at all times and under all conditions observe the golden mean. For, golden mean is the royal road to happiness. But Aristotle points out that the mean is not the same for all individuals, because choice is always bound up with virtue and the mean depends upon the choice. By intellectual virtues we mean the virtues which accompany the proper exercise of reason in its various functions. Generally the primary task of man’s intellect is to give the knowledge of invariable and fixed principles and secondly, to provide a rational guide for action in daily life. The man of practical wisdom is able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself and also about what sort of things favorable to good life, in general. Although, Aristotle acknowledges the importance of reason as a guide to moral action, he maintains that philosophic wisdom is superior even to practical wisdom. The activity which is in accordance with its proper virtue will be the perfect happiness. This activity is regarded as contemplative activity and contemplative activity is always belongs to self-sufficiency. Other animals have no share in happiness because they are deprived of virtuous activity. The person to whom contemplation more fully belongs are more truly happy not as a mere concomitant, but in virtue of the contemplation. So happiness must be form of contemplation. He says, “If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that is should be in accordance with the highest virtue, and this will be that of the best thing in us. Whether it be reason or something else that is this element which is thought to be our
natural ruler and to take thought of things noble and divine, whether it be itself also
divine or only the most divine element in us, the activity of this in accordance with its
proper virtue will be perfect happiness. That this activity is contemplative."16 Aristotle
shows that life of contemplation have the capacity to fulfill the conditions for
happiness or happy life or good life. So, good life is the happy life or the
contemplative life- the life of reason. It is superior then any other activity because it
aims no end beyond itself. Moreover, self-sufficiency, leisureliness, unweariedness
and all other attributes ascribed to the supremely happy man are evidently connected
with the activity.

Thus Aristotle develops, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* a theory of what is the

good life for human beings. The good life is, for a human being to live in the way that
is most suitable for a human that is according to reason. This is, what separates man
from animals, as man alone has the capacity to exercise reason. He also believes that
it is the ability to reason that is exclusive to human beings and therefore the good for
human is the maximum realization of that function. However, rationality is not
exclusive to humans as animals have been shown to exhibit rational behavior. But it
can not be rejected that reason is not exclusive to human, because Aristotle
formulated this presupposition in which the idea of good is formulated.

In a particular influential section of the Ethics (N.E.VIII) Aristotle considered
the role of human relationship in general and friendship is particular as a vital element
in the good life, "For without friends, no one would choose to live."17

Friends help us men to think and to act. Trust form of justice is thought to be a
friendly quality. Differentiating between the aims or goals of each, he distinguished
three kinds of friendships that we commonly form: A friendship for pleasure comes
into being when two people discover that they have common interest in an activity which they can pursue together. Their reciprocal participation in that activity results in greater pleasure for each than either could achieve by acting alone. Thus, for example, two people who enjoy playing tennis might derive pleasure from playing each other. Such a relationship lasts only so long as the pleasure continues.

A friendship grounded on utility comes into being when two people can benefit in some way by engaging in co-ordinated activity. In this case, the focus is on what use the two can derive from each other rather than on any enjoyment they might have. Thus, e.g., one person might teach another to play tennis for a fee, the one benefits by learning and the other benefits financially, their relationship is based on solely on the mutual utility. This type of friendship is also found in the student-teacher relationship and it lasts so long as it’s utility.

Thirdly, a friendship for the good comes into being when two people engage in common activity for the sake of developing the overall goodness of the other. Hence neither pleasure nor utility are relevant, but only good is, e.g. two people with heart disease might play tennis or might doing evening walk or other activity with each other for the sake of the exercise that contributes to the overall health of both. Since the good is never wholly realized, a friendship of this sort should in principle, last forever.

Genuine happiness lies in action that leads to virtue which consists of moral activity as well as intellectual activity. Since this alone provides true value and not just amusement. Thus Aristotle held that contemplation is the highest form of moral activity because it is continuous pleasant, self-sufficient and complete. In intellectual activity, human beings most nearly approach divine blessedness, while realizing all of
the genuine human virtues as well. By doing virtuous act man can develop the
capacity of goodness of character. Aristotle says that by doing virtuous act we become
virtuous. Here one question arises, how can we do virtuous acts unless we are already
virtuous? He replies that we begin by doing acts which are objectively virtuous,
without having a reflex knowledge of the acts and a deliberate choice of the acts as
good, a choice resulting from a habitual disposition. For instance, a child may be told
by its parents not to lie. It obeys without realizing perhaps the inherent goodness of
telling the truth and without having yet formed a habit of telling the truth, but the acts
of truth-telling gradually from the habit and as the process of education goes on, the
child comes to realize that truth telling is right in itself and to choose to tell the truth
for its own sake, as being the right thing to do. It is then virtuous in this respect. The
accusation of the vicious circle is thus answered by the distinction between the acts
which create the good disposition and the acts which flow from the good disposition
once it has been created. Virtue itself is a disposition which has been developed out of
a capacity by the proper exercise of that capacity.

Describing genuine happiness Aristotle describes the ideal man who is most
worthy of being happy. This ideal man "does not expose himself needlessly to danger,
but in willing in great crisis to give his life, if necessary. He takes joy in doing favors
to other man, but he feels shame in having favours done to him by other men. For it is
the mark of superiority to confer a kindness, but of inferiority to receive it."18

From the above analysis of Aristotle's good life described in *Nicomachean
Ethics*, we find that he defines the guidelines for human beings as a community to
achieve happiness. Happiness is something that human beings must constantly work
for and not a state that can just exist forever without struggle. Aristotle believes that
the only possible way for a society to be happy is through the study of political science. Ethics and politics are never divorced by him; the moral ends of man are promoted by legal and political means. According to Aristotle political science is a science that rules over all of the other sciences. He believes that political science dictates what sciences people should study within a city and who is capable of studying them. Political sciences adopt the rules of sciences obeyed by the human beings as a member of a city and it is not concerned with incapable person such as young and immature person because they are lack of experience. Political science is concerned with welfare of the community. It is the sciences that studies human happiness. Welfare of a community depends upon the welfare of the members of the community. If happiness is the highest good, and the aim of political science is to make everyone happy, then political science is the science that studies the highest good for all human beings. All sciences aim at a subordinate end that will eventually contribute to the happiness of a community. For example, the end of medicine is to make people healthy; however, this is not a complete end. Healthy citizens contribute to the happiness of a society, therefore making the end in itself happiness.

The highest good of human activity is happiness. All activities are subordinate to the aim of political science which is happiness. Because Aristotle argues that there is no end more complete than happiness, politics must be the science that studies the highest good of human beings in a society where everyone is happy. So, politics should be practiced perfectly and then success is sure.

According to Aristotle, state which implies Greek city state exists for an end and this is the supreme good of man in both moral and intellectual life. The state comes into existence for the bare ends of life, but it continues in existence for the sake
of good life. It is only in the state that man can live the good life in any full sense. Good life is man’s natural end, so the state is regarded as natural society. “It is evident that the state is a creature of nature and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without state is either above humanity or below it”\(^\text{19}\). Man’s gift of speech shows clearly that nature destined him for social life and social life in its especially complete form is, in Aristotle’s view that of state. The state is prior to the family and to the individual in the sense that, while the state is a self-sufficing whole, neither the individual nor the family is self-sufficient. “He who is unable to live a society or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself must be either a beast or a god.”\(^\text{20}\) Therefore the state has an important role in man’s life (i) as exercising for the positive function of serving the end of man, (ii) the leading of the good life or the acquisition of happiness and (iii) as being prior to the individual and the family.

The individual human being attains his proper development and perfection through his concrete life, which is a life of society i.e., in the state, while society attains in proper end through the perfection of its members. The state exists for the good life and it is subject to the same code of morality as the individual. As, he puts it, “the same things and best for the individual and states.”\(^\text{21}\)

According to Aristotle, man alone has the communicative ability which allows him to form political communities. For Aristotle the good is not attainable outside the political communities which are combination of people designed to live self-sufficiently in pursuit of the good. Aristotle did not regard ethics and politics as discrete, but rather as two aspects of a single subject of enquiry. Hence Ethics and politics are the same subject for Aristotle. His enquiry into ethics is a kind of politics
and as political communities and necessary to attain the good life, the two are necessarily the same. He does not separate this two practical sciences, ethics and politics. Ethics studies man's individual conduct, moral character (ethos) and happiness, politics studies the social, economic and political conduct of a citizen. However, both aim at the morally good life of man and citizen. In the second chapter of N.E., Aristotle maintains that ethics is a branch of politics i.e., it is the duty of the statesman to create for the citizens the best possible opportunity of living the good life. Again he says that politics stands for ethics, thus politics is an outgrowth of ethics. Man is not an isolated being. He lives in society and in the Greek polis. Politics, in an immediate sense, created the laws and institutions for the civilized, moral and happy human life. "The good life then is the chief end of society both collectively for all its members and individuality."22 Both politics and ethics are practical episteme, both aims at achieving the good life.

Aristotle conceives virtue or happiness as an object of knowledge on the ground that happiness means welfare, perfect realization of one's potentialities. But even the distinction between pleasure and happiness, Aristotle conceives that pleasure which accompany happiness are knowable phenomena. For, only the good man's pleasure is real and truly human and the existence of this is known by the wise man. The preference of the wise man is to constitute the guideline of our conduct that is to say of our moral duty. Aristotle on the whole is inclined to conceive a real distinction between what is truly desirable or happiness and what may falsely appear to one as such, because if happiness means prosperity or welfare of the party concerned then there is an objective criterion to verify it and only an expert is capable of knowing
what end or act fits in that criterion. After all according to Aristotle, true happiness is that which is recognized by the wise man as happiness. 

A treatment of vice is appropriate in just about any moral theory, but it is especially important in virtue centered theory of Aristotle. In that approach a vice is a state of character that is both bad and sufficiently fixed in the agent so that the agent habitually acts wrongly. In virtue centered theorizing the agents character – virtues or vices have a more basic place in the overall view of morality. Moreover, in this approach to theorizing, virtues and vices are acquired. They are not simply present in us by nature though we do have propensities and tendencies grounded in temperament. The presence of vice depends upon how the agent chooses, acts and is motivated. Temperament influences that, but does not determine it. Thus vice is voluntary. 

Aristotle’s concept of good life is altruistic in nature. On the basis of one sided thinking, some thinkers remark that, Aristotle’s conception is egoistic while Mill’s conception is altruistic. They argue that the happiness which Aristotle expects the virtuous agent to pursue is individual happiness of the agent himself. By considering the views found in book X of *Nicomachean Ethics*, that happiness is the ultimate good and it is desired for its own sake never for the sake of anything else, they remark that Aristotle’s concept of good life is egoistic. Here Aristotle refers to happiness as consisting of the most perfect activity of the wise man i.e. the contemplation, since reason is man’s distinctive virtue. From this standpoint, it is correct to say that his view is egoistic. But in Book I section II of *Nicomachean Ethics* he points out that the good of the community is above the good of the individual. The good of the individual may coincide with that of the community; still the good of the community
must be preserved over and above the good of the individual. He says, “though it is worth while to attain the end merely for one man, it is finer and more god like to attain it for a nation or for city states.” According to Aristotle, a man requires and desires social communion with others. He says that final good must be sufficient by itself. He remarks, “Now by self-sufficient we do not mean that which is sufficient for a man by himself, for one who lives a solitary, but also for parents, children, wife and in general for his friends and fellow citizens, since man is born for citizenship.”

Aristotle’s individual is a citizenship of the society and is conceived only as such, all his virtues broadly referring only to citizen’s duty. The happiness of the state determines the character of the individual’s virtue and hence of his happiness, so far as his happiness consists of his virtuous activities. From the above discussion it is proved that Aristotle’s conception of good life is altruistic, not egoistic. In the first part of his ethical theory he says that the ultimate end is desire for its own sake, not for the sake of anything else. From this standpoint, Aristotle seems to be an egoist. But a closer examination reveals that he is not only interested in the good of the individual but also in the good of the community and said that the good of the community is above the good of the individual. Therefore he is an altruist in the field of moral philosophy. His concept of good life falls under the moral theory named ‘Goal- Oriented Morality’ because it is mainly based on how people behaved and on their fitting into practices of the community rather than obeying principles for their own sake. Moreover, Aristotle considers virtuous activities as guideline or as instrument to achieve the ideal society and the best life for everyone rather than taking it as absolute in them. According to Aristotle, the good life is the life of virtuous actions filled with pleasure, too perhaps, but it was not the pleasure which makes life
good. Although Aristotle was quite explicitly a goal-oriented moralist, he also included within his theory the element that might be considered as a part of morality of principles. For example, like Kant, he considered reason and rationality essential to good life and rationality for him included the understanding and contemplation of principles. Moreover, these principles have authority both the authority of reason and authority of society as a whole which is their justifications.

As one of the means of the good life, pleasure completes the activity as an end which supervenes as the bloom of youth does on those in the flower of their age. All human beings are incapable of continuous activity, so pleasure also is not continuous, for it accompanies activity. Pleasure and activity seem to be bound up together and cannot be separated, since "without activity pleasure does not arise, and every activity is completed by the attendant pleasure. For this reason pleasures seem, too, to differ in kind. For thing different in kind are, we think, completed by different things (we see this to be true both of natural objects and of things produced by art, e.g., animals, trees, a painting, a sculpture, a house, an implement); and similarly, we think that activities differing in kind are completed by things differing in kind. Now the activities of thought differ from those of the senses, and both differ among themselves, in kind; so, therefore, do the pleasures that complete them." Thus Aristotle says that pleasure differ in kind. This can also be seen from the close connection of each pleasure with the activity that it perfects. For, the pleasure proper to an activity intensifies it, for those who work with pleasure show better judgment and greater precision in dealing with that particular kind of object. Moreover, things proper to different things are also different in kind. Thus pleasures intensify their activities and what intensifies a thing is proper to it. Thus according to Aristotle
corresponding to different kinds of activity there are different kinds of pleasure and it implies the distinction of pleasure not only in quantity but also in quality. The perfect and the happy man has one or more activities and the pleasures that perfect these will be said in the strict sense to be pleasures proper to man, and the rest will be so in a secondary and fractional way, as are the activities.

From the above discussion it is seen that we have already discussed the virtues, the forms of friendships and verities of pleasures, what remains is to discuss in outline the nature of happiness, since this is what we state the end of human nature to be. Our discussion will be the more concise if we first sum up what we have said already. We said, then, that it is not a disposition, for if it were it might belong to some one who was asleep throughout his life, living the life of a plant, or, again, to someone who was suffering the greatest misfortunes. If these implications are unacceptable, and we must rather class happiness as an activity, as we have said before, and if some activities are necessary, and desirable for the sake of something else, while others are so in themselves, evidently happiness must be placed among those desirable in themselves, not among those desirable for the sake of something else; for happiness does not lack anything, but it is self-sufficient. Now those activities are desirable in themselves from which nothing is sought beyond the activity. And of this nature virtuous actions are thought to be; for to do noble and good deeds is a thing desirable for its own sake.

In short we can say that the good life is defined by Aristotle as the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. According to Aristotle, when a conflict arises between the moral virtues, it can be resolved only by following the conduct of virtuous people, that is the conduct of virtuous people guides us about what ought to
be done at the time of internal conflict amongst moral virtues. But moral conflict cannot be resolved, for some thinkers as indicated by Aristotle. They argue that to resolve the conflict with the help of the good life of Aristotle which consist in the attainment of happiness we do not find any solution, because virtuous life is a good life and good life is a happy life. When examine the concept of good life, we find that it is different to different people in different context. So it is impossible to determine what is truly good in human life. Some thinkers interpret moral virtue in deontological sense, some in teleological sense and some in spiritual sense. All such views indicate that the idea of good in human life is vague. So good life is an obscure idea, it cannot give us any solution for the inner conflict of moral virtues. But if we analyze Aristotle’s good life, we find that happiness is that which all man aim, it does not differ to different persons. So it has some value in modern world. According to Aristotle, the good for human would be maximum realization of the function that is unique to humans and reason is the quality possesses by human being. So good for human consists in reason and it teaches human being how to act virtuously. The good for individual is the exercise of these facilities in accordance with virtue. Virtue consists of both intellectual and moral activity. Intellectual activity is composed of theoretical wisdom, practical wisdom and understanding. Experience and times are also necessary requirement for the development of intellectual virtue. Moral virtue is controlled by practical wisdom and owed its development to habit. Only philosophers have the ability to lead a good life, according to him. He excluded women, slave, and lower classes animal, children from the domain of leading the good life on the basis that they are unable to take their own decision and also on the basis of their lack of control because they could not choose an action for its own sake. Therefore, they were
unable to practice the virtues. Animals were excluded from the good life as they could not exercise rationality. Children were excluded as they had not yet had occasion to practice the virtues, particularly intellectual virtues. Those who had experienced great loss were unable to lead the good life since it would be difficult to learn new friendships and friendship is a necessary requirement for leading the good life. The chronically ill would find it difficult to learn desires of a healthy person, since health is a requirement of leading the good life, this group is also excluded. Isolated persons are also unable to lead good life according to him, because as virtues necessitated action and therefore required an object to be acted upon. For example, generosity requires a person in a state of deprivation. Aristotle excluded these groups from leading the good life on the basis of factors outside their control He also admits friendship, good health, fortune as the requirement for leading a good life. If good life requires such elements then it cannot be regarded as self-sufficient which Aristotle characterizes as the condition of good life. Because, self-sufficient implies the ability to maintain oneself, without depending on others, i.e., it implies independence as well as lack in nothing. Therefore his view seems to be self-contradictory.

Again Aristotle acknowledges that luck has a role to play in the good life. But he does not explain the scope of effects of luck on good life. Luck's effect on the good life is much greater than Aristotle acknowledges. So the good life being dependent on luck cannot be considered as self-sufficient.

Aristotle also admits that, the candidates for good life besides having the opportunities to act on the ventures, must have known what he is doing, chosen to act the way he does and chooses it for its own sake and the act must come from a firm unchangeable character. So, good life is dependent on favorable external factors
outside a person’s control. If it is so, Aristotle feels that there would be no point in living as all our actions would be means to some other ends and there would be no final purpose to our action. If we are to attribute too much to the element of luck in leading the good life, Aristotle believes that life would have no meaning while at the same time acknowledging that without good fortune one could not lead the good life. But he is unable to resolve this dilemma.

Although we find some discrepancy in the view of Aristotle’s good life, we find a very fine analysis of good life, of the moral and the intellectual virtues, which he analyses much more completely and systematically than by Plato. Aristotle’s view gives a clear solution of hedonism according to which pleasure is the ultimate end of life and that of rationalism, according to which reason is the guide of our life. Because Aristotle says that morality is habitual control of passion and appetites by reason and in doing this, pleasure and happiness necessarily result as necessary consequences. Thus Aristotle successfully reconciles the partial claim of Sophists, Socrates and Plato.
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2. Ibid. p. 13.
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5. Ibid., p.18.
6. Ibid., p. 19.
7. Peter. (Tr.). Nicomachean Ethics, i, 2.
8. Ibid, i.4.
9. Ibid, i.7.
11. Peter’s translation i. 8, 10.
15. Ibid, p.32-33.
17. Ibid, p. 175.