CHAPTER II

ARISTOTLE CONCEPT OF MEANING OF LIFE
Chapter II

Aristotle concept of meaning of life

Introduction

Aristotle (384 BC- 322 BC) was a Greek philosopher, a devoted student of Plato and a teacher of Alexander the Great. He was one of the most important founding figures in western philosophy. He was the first to create a comprehensive system of Western philosophy, encompassing morality and aesthetics, logic and science, politics and metaphysics. In the biological sciences, some of his observations were confirmed to be accurate only in the nineteenth century. His works contain the earliest known formal study of logic, which was incorporated in the late nineteenth century into modern formal logic. In metaphysics, Aristotelianism had a profound influence on philosophical and theological thinking in the middle ages, and it continues to influence Christian theology. All aspects of his philosophy continue to be the object of active academic study even today. He has written a number of books on various discipline and subject matter. Aristotle considered ethics to be a practical science, i.e., one mastered by doing rather than merely reasoning. Further, he believed that ethical knowledge is not certain knowledge but is general knowledge. In this dissertation the main emphasis would be done on Nicomachean Ethics.  

The object of this chapter is to give an outline of his central view with regard to how a person should live, to explore the reason why he holds on to his view and what his view, concerning the present title of this work, could contribute to the reader at large.

He believes that there is no point in studying or acquiring an ethical knowledge without being able to live according to what one has acquired

through the study. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, he gives a thorough examination of
the good, function of man virtue, means, pleasure, wisdom, justice, friendship,
contemplation and human happiness.

Aristotle begins his inquiry into ‘the good’ by proposing the good to be
that for the sake of which the other things are done. The *Nicomachean Ethics* is
an attempt to describe what it takes for a human being to live a good (i.e.,
happy) life. The key concept is the idea of eudaimonia, usually translated into
English as “happiness.” In this book, he tries to show how a man can live in the
best possible way in a society.

Traditionally it is believed that *Ethica Nicomachea* is dedicated to his son
Nicomachus. It is suppose to be an anecdote which could lead his son to live a
happy and flourishing life. According to Aristotle things are not done
accidentally. Every act or pursuit is believed to be carried out after deliberation
or proper knowledge of how it is to be achieved or by what means a thing can
be achieved. And if there are many ways or means to achieve that particular
goal, it should be according to the best means or ways.27 As he states in his
very first sentence in *Ethica Nicomachea*, he believes that every act of mankind
is directed towards good.28 He takes this stand because he opines that every
act is preceded by an act of deliberation, and man will not deliberate on the
thing that will be bad. Man acts only after a proper knowledge about the subject
matter and that too, if only, it is found to be good. If someone has performed an
act, that action itself becomes a confirmation that he has deliberated on it and
found it to be good. So, an act is performed, only after a deliberation and has a
proper knowledge of all the possible means, in the best possible way.

When man acts, it is not acted or performed for nothing. It has a plan or
purpose in doing the things that is done. According to Aristotle, everything that
we pursue or aim at is good. Some of the goods we pursue are activities (e.g.
singing) and some are products of activities (e.g. award or honour). While
there are many goods that we pursue, these goods can be hierarchically

---

27 Ibid, 1112a. 20 - 1113a. 14
28 Ibid, 1094a1-5
ordered according to for-the-sake-of relationships. While some goods are pursued for their own sake, others are pursued for the sake of something else. If A is pursued for the sake of B, then B is a higher good than A. By ordering goods in this way, we find a kind of pyramid of goods, with those goods that we pursue for their own sakes near the top, and those goods that are merely useful for the attainment of other goods near the bottom. Thus, while every goal we pursue is good in itself, sometimes it can be pursued in a way that compromises the attainment of higher goods—making the overall pursuit bad.

There is only one good that Aristotle thinks is pursued entirely for itself, and not for the sake of anything else. That good, according to Aristotle, is eudaimonia—usually translated as "happiness" although some translated as "success" and "flourishing".

He used the term 'good' to refer to the ends which people pursue, because he believes that everyman do the things that they do with a proper knowledge about the means that is required of to achieve the presume ends, and that man would not do anything base knowingly. So if anyone has done something, his action itself is there to justify that he has deliberated on it and found it to be good. This good is not something that is sought after by a single person but by everyone. For instance, if I say that doing X leads to good, there should be some criteria or standard to justify my saying or doing X. and this standard or criteria applicable to my belief in upholding the condition of X to be good must be supported by the fact that it is something that is generally sought by the people and not on my own account.

Chief Good

As there are many activities of man so are his aims and goods. Even to achieve a single end, at times, there would be numerous means to get the desired end. During such situation, Aristotle believes that man must go for the best possible mean to get the best possible end. But it is a common fact that even this best possible end usually turns out to be a means for further ends, and so he states "If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we
desire for its own sake (everything else being desire for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good".  

Knowing that if one seek A for B and B for C and so on the cycle of ends would be infinite. He tried to find a way out of this cyclic redundancy by looking for an end which is desired for its own sake. This end should be something which leads man towards it in every action that he does. The end or the highest good achievable by action that which is pursued for its own sake is happiness-Eudaimonia. He calls this end a final without qualification, is self-sufficient and is the end of action. But regarding self-sufficiency he makes it clear that it is not sufficient for a man by himself; for man is born for citizenship.

Function

Now he realizes that stating happiness to be the chief good alone is incomplete. We need to know what it is, why it is considered so, and how it can be achieved. In order to answer all these questions the first step that he took or suggests is to ascertain the unique function of man as a man. Function is that which makes a thing what it is, rather than something else. Now his focus is to find out the unique function of man that is not shared by any other thing. Human beings certainly have functions that they acquire as the result of taking on certain social roles—flutist, sculptor, parent, student, teacher, administrator, pianist, lawyer etc,—and hence various role has specific virtues. But we are looking for the chief good of human beings as such. Do humans have a function simply as human beings, apart from any and all social roles? Put in a somewhat different way; is there some end that we are uniquely suited to attain by virtue of our human nature, apart from our particular roles and occupations? If so, it would have to be some more specific end than building a house or cooking.

---

29 Ibid, 1094a.17-23  
30 Ibid, 1097b.6-12  
31 Ibid, 1097b.21-23
According to Aristotle there is a unique function of man which is entirely
distinct from all the other living beings. What is it that man does which
definitively separates him from other creatures? The reproductive and digestive
functions, even desire and pleasure, are shared by humans and animals, so the
function of man cannot be limited to these concepts. He opines that the good
and the well to be embed in its function. As a flutist, sculptor, or any artist have
a function or activity like wise man will have a function which is peculiar in
nature. And this function of man, if it can be utilized in a proper channel, would
constitute to be a determining factor to the highest or the supreme good-
happiness. He calls this unique function to be reason. In this very function the
good and the well of man is said to reside in it. Aristotle claimed that reason,
the exercise of the rational faculty, is the realm exclusive to man and the
meaning of what it is to be "man".

Aristotle adds the idea of excellence to the idea of distinctive function.
The function of a guitar player is to play the guitar; the function of an
accomplished guitarist is to play the guitar excellently. If the function of a
human being is to live in accordance with reason, then the function of a self-
actualized human being is to reason excellently. Happiness- eudaimonia-
results from excellent reasoning and from living in accordance with excellent
reasoning. Our function, he concludes, is to be excellently rational. But what
does that involve?

Aristotle believes that human beings have three parts to their psychologies,
what he calls three "souls":

a. The vegetative soul (that unconscious part that takes care of autonomic
functions such as digestion and circulation),
b. The animal soul (that conscious part that feels emotions, desires, and
appetites), and the
c. Rational soul (that part that thinks, evaluates, judges, beliefs, etc.).

Of these, both the animal and rational souls may exhibit excellent rationality.
The rational soul may be rational in itself, and the animal soul may be subject to
reason—that is, ruled by reason. When the rational soul is doing its job well, it attains wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. The habits of thought and intellectual skills that help it to do this job are called intellectual virtues. This element is said to be active. So the function of man is to perform an activity implying rationality. He cited the example of a lyre player and a good lyre player. Though the function remains the same the difference between them is that in the former case it is just to play, but in the later case to play well or excellently; the quality of goodness being added to it. Likewise, in the context of good man or happy man its function is to do good and noble act following the rational principle.

**Sense of Good**

The good that we are dealing with at the moment is that of the soul and not the external goods. This good fits to the definition of a happy man or happiness. According to Aristotle some people identify happiness either with virtue or practical wisdom or with a kind of philosophic wisdom or a combination of these or with one of these along with pleasure or without and some include the external goods as well. He opines that people who identify virtue is right because virtue belongs to virtuous activity. This virtue or chief good is not static or stationed like that of the man who is asleep but active. Since it is active, it will be acting and it will not be some kind of action performed for the sake of performing but it will be performing well; for it is in accordance with the rational principle.

A man who lives by the dictates of rational principle and does a virtuous activity is said to be pleasant in itself. As horse and spectacle are pleasant to the lover so is a just acts or virtuous acts to the lover of justice and virtue. But he says that pleasure of other kind are in conflicts with one another because they are not pleasant by nature. But virtuous actions are pleasant for the man as well as in their own nature. The reason that he gave in support of this stand is that virtuous actions are good and noble and has the highest degree of attributes of each (good and noble).
Virtue

To understand the nature of happiness better he tries to unfold the exact nature of virtue. This virtue is that of human; not of the body but of the soul, because happiness is said to be the activity of the soul and not that of the body. The soul is said to have two elements viz. rational and irrational.

These two elements of the soul, if it can be like parts of the body which can be separated or something inseparable or indivisible is of no importance concerning the present issue. The irrational element, which causes nutrition and growth, is said to be shared by all species and not a distinct quality of man. For that matter the nature of irrational element of the soul has no place in human excellence. One particular reason for this case is that this element functions mostly during sleep; that is to say no activity of the soul is involved. But, of the irrational element the appetitive-desiring element shares in the rational element. This is so in so far as this desiring element obeys the rational principle as in the case of advice, exhortation, etc.,

Based on the difference of this irrational element of the soul, virtue is also distinguished into two kinds. Some are intellectual, and others moral. Of these two, intellectual virtue is the out-come of teaching and that of moral virtue to habit. Philosophic wisdom and understanding and practical wisdom are intellectual virtues, and liberality and temperance are moral virtues.

Whatever man gets from nature is in the form of potentialities. It is like those of the senses, whose activities are later exhibited. It is not because of its uses that they are what they are; the nature itself has in a way implanted and so they are destine to function in that nature. But when it comes to the question of virtue, (man have the potentiality), it is only through exercising them that we get them. (e. g. like the builders or the temperate man). He further states that it is from the same causes and by the same means that every virtue is both produced and destroyed, and similarly every art\(^{32}\). This is to say, by building well or badly a builder is termed as a good builder or bad builder so is also that

\(^{32}\) Ibid, 1103b. 6-19
of the temperate or just man. The virtue that we are discussing right now is to be acquired through teachings and others by exercising them in the right way. A virtue is not merely an admirable or socially useful quality: it is quite specifically a quality that makes you good at performing your function. An important part of Aristotle's task in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is therefore to show that the characteristics that we commonly think of as the moral virtues really are virtues in this technical sense—qualities that make us good at rational activity. After all, Aristotle proposes what is generally acknowledged to be a kind of definition of virtue: it is a state "concerned with choice, lying in a mean relative to us, this being determined by reason and in the way in which the man of practical wisdom would determine it." Aristotle's descriptions of the virtues are therefore not merely intended to show us that virtue is in a mean, but to show us how having qualities that are in a mean makes us good at rational activity.

The soul is said to have - passions, faculties, and states of character. First, he assumed one of these three things must be what virtue is. By passions he means anger, fear, confidence, envy, etc. In general he said it is the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain. By faculties he means the ability of the soul to response to a given situation or the power to stir up the emotion of the soul, with regard to passions. And by states of character, he means the way how man reacts or responds to any of the passions at a given situation either badly or well. On account of the definitions that he gave about passions, faculties, and states of character, he says passions do not fall neither within nor even vices. We are not termed or called good or bad, praised or blamed and we do not choose to be angry or fear of something on the ground of passions. On the other hand it is with virtues or vices. Passions move us whereas virtues or vices dispose us in a particular way. The same thing holds true even in the case of faculties. We are not good or bad, praised or blamed for being able to feel or experience the passions. Faculty is something that is given by nature. Nature does not make man good or bad. They are as it is. He

---

33 Ibid, 1106b. 35ff
has already said that virtue is not something that is in the state of potentialities. It has to be acquired externally through activities.

After rejecting passions and faculties to be neither virtue nor vices, he states that it must be states of character. In order to proof this point, he says, every excellence and virtue of anything makes the thing itself and the acts or products good. He cites the example of an eye and horse in its excellence and came to conclude that it must be the state of character which makes a man good and makes him do his own work well.\footnote{ibid, 1105b.20-1106b.30}

The Golden Mean

For every emotion, every desire or appetite, every behavioral disposition, there is a corresponding moral virtue, as well as moral vices. Virtues and vices are states of character. According to Aristotle, emotions and desires have purposes with respect to the whole person, but they fulfill these purposes only if they are felt at the right time, in the right way, to the right degree. This "right amount" of an emotion or desire is said to be the mean between the extremes of excess and deficiency.

Thus, for every feeling you have, you can be virtuous (if your character is such that you feel it in the appropriate way), or you can exhibit the vice of excess (too much of the feeling) or the vice of deficiency (too little). For example, with respect to anger there is the vice of short-temperedness (excess), the vice of insensibility (deficiency) and the virtue of even-temperedness. There is also a golden mean with respect to the disposition to perform certain kinds of actions. For example, the generous person has the virtue of being disposed to give away money in a fitting way (neither too much nor too little). Aristotle makes it clear that he is not talking about a mathematical middle, but the perfect intermediate point with regard to us. To adapt an example Aristotle gives, if a baby only needs a teacup full of food each day to thrive, and a fully grown adult needs three square meals, that doesn't mean the ideal amount is halfway in between. If you're old enough to be reading this, you
probably need an amount a lot closer to the three square meals than the teacup. The same thing goes with the mean. The perfect point might be closer to excess, or closer to deficiency.

He tries to give the nature of virtue in simple and clear picture. The things that are continuous and divisible can be taken more, less or an equal amount either in terms of the thing itself or relatively to us. The equal is the intermediate between excess and defect. The intermediate relatively to us is that which is neither too much nor too little. The intermediate that he refers to does not comply with the principle of arithmetic or that of an object that could be same in every case and one for all the people but the intermediate relatively to us (this may have certain variation depending upon person to person even of the same thing at the same time). But nevertheless if one looks for such type of intermediate in everything the act is bound to perform well.

A man of virtue would always avoid the two extremes- excess and defect which is in the form of failure/vices- and look for an intermediate which he opines is in the form of success. Thus he says virtue is a kind of mean for it aims at the intermediate and so excess and defect are the characteristics of vices.\(^{35}\)

With this notion about virtue as a mean he in fact realized that it is not applicable to every passion and action; for those things embed the badness in its terms itself. The example he cites are spite, shamelessness, envy, adultery, murder etc.. There are no means for such kinds of passion and action. The mean of such thing would be excess of excess and deficiency of deficiency which are in fact absurd. It does not make any difference by the means of such terms. It always remains as bad or wrong. But as of courage and temperance there is no excess or deficiency for their intermediates are in the forms of an extreme.

It has already been stated that one should choose the intermediate which is between the excess and defect. This intermediate is determined by the

\(^{35}\) Ibid, 1107a.1-5
dictates of the rule. But just asserting or stating something to be the case is not enough. So he tries to find out the nature of the rule or what exactly are the right rule and the standard that fixes it.

We have stated before that there are two parts of the soul which grasp the rational principle and irrational. Regarding these two he assumed that there are two parts which grasp a rational principle. "One by which we contemplate the kind of things whose originative causes are invariable, and one by which we contemplate variable things". He calls the two parts as scientific and calculative. But people do not deliberate on invariables, and so he asserts that calculative is one part of the soul which grasp the rational principle.

According to Aristotle sensation, reason and desire are the three things in the soul which control the action and truth. Choice is considered to be the efficient cause of action and denies sensation to be the cause of action. The origin of choice is desire and reasoning with a view to an end. Choice exists because of reason and intellect or a moral state. By intellect it means that which aims at an end. It is practical and specific. For instance, if one chooses A for an end B it should be only B and not C or D or any other end except B. That is why for him choice is either desirative reason or ratiocinative desire. Now he asserts that such an action originates from man.

As far as an object of choice, past has no place in it. It is all about future and the capability of being otherwise. In short, no one deliberate about the past because no one can change the history.

He states that the virtue of a thing is relative to its proper work. So with regard to these intellectual parts (scientific and calculative) the task is to attain truth. When this truth is in the state where no other better possible truth can be derived it becomes the virtue of both the intellectual parts. Now what is left is to find out that particular state of virtue of the two parts.

---

36 Ibid, 1139a. 5-10
37 Ibid, 1139a. 17f
He assumed that art, scientific knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophic wisdom, and intuitive reason are the states on account of which the soul by way of affirmation and negation possess the truth. Scientific knowledge is judgment about the universal and necessary where it is not capable of being otherwise. Their object is of necessity and so it is eternal. It is the capacity to demonstrate. By art he meant about the ability to make (making) with the help of reasoning. It is in the hand of the maker and not in a nature state. It is concerned with making and not acting. Art is concerned with variable. He says practical wisdom is a true and reasoned state of capacity to act concerning things that are good or bad for man. It is the ability to think and judge the best possible way in a given situation.

He says wisdom must be the most complete and accomplished form of knowledge as it is the combination of intuitive reason and scientific knowledge. Based on this he says a wise man must not have a mere knowledge of the basis or origin of the first principle but the truth about the first principle must be within him. Now the point with which we are concerned at the moment is the philosophic wisdom i.e. a combination of scientific knowledge and intuitive reason. It is to be noted that philosophic wisdom that which is derived with the combination of scientific knowledge and intuitive reason is not just from mere things but of that things that are highest by nature. It is the ability to think well about the nature of the world, to discern why the world is the way it is. Philosophic wisdom involves deliberation concerning universal truths.

**Practical Wisdom**

Practical Wisdom which is translated from the Greek "phronesis" as "Prudence" is a knowledge of how to secure the ends of human life. Aristotle holds that having phronesis is both necessary and sufficient for a man to become virtuous because it is practical. The decisions of a practically wise person are not mere intuitions, but can be justified by a chain of reasoning. He writes;
"The work of man is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral virtue; for virtue makes us aim at the right mark, and practical wisdom makes us take the right means." 38

It is the capability to consider the mode of action in order to deliver change, especially to enhance the quality of life. Aristotle says that practical wisdom is not merely a skill. It is concerned with particulars, because it is concerned with how to act in particular situations. One can learn the principles of action, but applying them in the real world, in situations one could not have foreseen, requires experience of the world. For this reason he says young people do not have the knowledge of practical wisdom because they lack experience. 39

It is a type of perceptual capacity which a virtuous person has acquired in proper upbringing and by means of which that person is able to discern the practically salient features of the situations in which he or she acts. In their behaviour such persons express this type of understanding to the necessities of situations, and so clarification of such actions can simply advert to those relevant features of the situations to which a person is receptive.

Particularly in terms of its usefulness with regard to philosophic wisdom and practical wisdom he points out the difficulties that one may face. As of philosophic wisdom he says it will not contemplate on things that will make a man happy, because it is not concerned with a state of becoming. But he further states that as health produces health and not as an art of medicine which produces health, philosophic wisdom too produces happiness. This is so because philosophic wisdom is a part of a virtue entire. And so when it actualizes it makes man happy.

The problem that he raised with practical wisdom concerns in a situation where the person is good in itself, or if it is to posses the moral truth it will not make any difference to a person by possessing the practical wisdom. He says

38 Ibid, 1144a. 7-8
39 Ibid, 1142a. 15
that practical wisdom is one of the virtues of the two parts of the soul. By virtue of this its state must be worthy of choice. Virtue makes us aim at the right mark and make the choice right and practical wisdom leads us to the right means. So to quote him

"...that in order to be good one must be in a certain state when one does the several acts i.e. one must do them as a result of choice and for the sake of the acts themselves".40

Now he says that choice is not under virtue but it belongs to another faculty which he calls 'cleverness'. This faculty helps man to be able to hit the target set by man. Hence either to be clever, or otherwise, depends upon the target or mark set by man. Though practical wisdom is not the faculty, it is never apart from this faculty. And this faculty acquires its formed state only with the help of virtue. Even if all these conditions are taken into account and acted out in order to achieve a particular end, he says wickedness twists and we get deceived about the starting point of action. Therefore, he says if one is not good it is impossible to be practically wise.

He says that virtue is related to cleverness as practical wisdom is to cleverness. But nevertheless they are not the same but as is natural virtue to virtue in the strict sense. Virtue in its strict sense is said to involve a practical wisdom. For him all the forms of virtue are not practical wisdom though it implies a practical wisdom. That is why he says, for it is not merely the state in accordance with the right rule, but the state that implies the presence of the right rule, that is virtue; and practical wisdom is a right rule about such matter.41 He says that it is practical wisdom that helps man to choose rightly. But nevertheless he asserts that it cannot be superior to philosophic wisdom for it concerns only with things coming into being. In short we can say that it is only as a means and not as an end.

40 Ibid, 1144a.15-20
41 Ibid, 1144b. 25-27
Our rational soul, when it is operating effectively, can tell through experience what is fitting—but until our feeling and dispositions are aligned with what reason dictates, we are not excellently rational.

But how do we bring our emotions, desires, and behavioral dispositions into line with what reason recommends? Aristotle says that our states of character are cultivated “through like activities.” Our feelings and behavioral dispositions are a matter of habituation. If we consistently behave in an angry way in a given situation, we will develop the habit of feeling anger in that situation. If we consistently behave in a calm manner in the situation, we will develop the habit of feeling calm. Hence, if we want to develop virtuous states of character, we need to do so through repeatedly acting in the corresponding ways until it becomes internalized. Virtues are really nothing more than good habits.

Now he claims that moral virtue is a mean between two vices. This is so because the character of moral virtue is to aim at the intermediate in passions and in actions. In fact he remarks that it is not an easy task for a man to do what is good. In other words the ways to find out the means or the intermediate of passion and action is not an easy task. It is because of these factors which are involved in determining the means that whosoever manages to walk right into that path is appreciated. As of how or by what means a mean or an intermediate can be grasped is not explicated explicitly or given in a straight forward method. He just states that when things are perceived by senses, that too depending upon the particular facts, the option to determine the means, lies in perception. He further states, at time one has to incline/favour towards the excess and sometimes towards the deficiency. If only then one can make the best judgment in ascertaining the mean rightly.

The virtues that he is discussing in this context are those that are not destroyed by the defective or excessive. The example that he cites are “For the man who flies from and fears everything and does not stand his ground against anything becomes a coward, and the man who fears nothing at all but goes to meet every danger becomes rash…” so the mean that lies between these two
conditions is courage. Such means which are considered to be virtuous, that lie between the two extremes without explanations are tabled below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deficiency</th>
<th>Virtuous Mean</th>
<th>Excess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cowardice</td>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Rashness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiberality</td>
<td>Liberality</td>
<td>Prodigality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pettiness</td>
<td>Munificence</td>
<td>Vulgarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humble-mindedness</td>
<td>High-mindedness</td>
<td>Vaingloriness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want of Ambition</td>
<td>Right Ambition</td>
<td>Over-ambition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritlessness</td>
<td>Good Temper</td>
<td>Irascibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surliness</td>
<td>Friendly Civility</td>
<td>Obsequiousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironical Depreciation</td>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td>Boastfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boorishness</td>
<td>Wittiness</td>
<td>Buffoonery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamelessness</td>
<td>Modesty</td>
<td>Bashfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callousness</td>
<td>Just Resentment</td>
<td>Spitefulness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Things that Virtues are concern with**

Based on these means that lie between two extremes, he draws another point regarding virtue. Now he says virtue is concerned with pleasures and pains. He writes “as Plato says, so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought; for this is the right education”. So a man, who is not pained by what it ought to be or does not avoid when it should be and the same

---

42 Ibid, 1104a. 20-25  
43 Ibid, 1104b. 12-13
thing with pleasures, lands up in either of the two extremes which he calls vice or base. According to him there are three objects of choice and three of avoidance. They are the noble, the advantageous, the pleasant, and their contraries, the base, the injurious, the painful. With regard to this choices and avoidances he says, a good man will do what is right and a bad man wrong. He gives a special emphasis on pleasure; for this is shared even by the animals as well. Even among man this is taken by him to be a kind of crucial point through which man tends to give in or blinded by its extremes and so it is harder than the other choices. But virtues are concerns with hard things; the harder it is the better it will be so is that of good. The actions are the determining factors in the issue of pleasures and pains for a man to increase or destroy. If only man acts rightly in both the cases, as ought to be, would moral excellence flourish.

The next question that he raised is why do we say that a man become just by doing just acts, and temperate by doing temperate acts. He contrasted this condition with arts. The drawing line between these two positions is that of the state of man. In doing just acts, it is not only the acts that are just but we say just man for doing just acts. In the case of arts doing a good work does not entail good man; for the goodness of the work resides in the products themselves unlike that of the just or temperate acts. On top of this, it is not only the action that is counted, but, event the condition of the agent differs to a great extent according to him.

In the case of arts, just a knowledge of that particular work, usually suffices for a good products. On the other hand, in the context of just or temperate acts, he opines that the agent must possess three conditions before the acts are performed. First, he must have knowledge. Secondly, he must choose the acts and that too for their own sake, and thirdly his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character. So for him if and only if an action is done in accordance with these three conditions of an agent that he laid down would the act and the man be just. It is only through the acts done under those conditions that a man has a room to become good.

44 Ibid, 1105a.16-25
Voluntary and Involuntary

The actions and passions he talks about is that of voluntary; for it is only such acts that are praised or blamed. On the other hand the involuntary acts are pardoned and sometimes pitied. According to him the involuntary acts are those done out of ignorance or compulsion. Compulsory acts are those caused by external circumstances where decision or the will power of an agent is not exercised regarding the intensity or effect of the action to be carried out or undertaken. The external causes or circumstances includes like natures- wind, earthquakes, tyrant, dictators etc,. He says that it is very difficult to determine some actions either as voluntary or involuntary; for they seem to be involved in one way or the other in it. He cites the example of throwing goods overboard in a storm. Foresseeing such difficulties he says “both the terms, then, ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’, must be used with reference to the moment of action”\textsuperscript{45}. To qualify for an action to have been done by reason of ignorance, he says an agent must be pained by the action and must repent. If only then, it becomes involuntary. Regarding voluntary action, he says the moving principle should be within the agent and the particular circumstances where the agent is to be acted should be within the knowledge of the agent.

Choice is said to fall under voluntary act but it is superior because voluntary action is shared even by lower animals where as choice is not. He tries to find out what choice is by finding out what choice is not. He denies appetite, anger or wish or opinion to be choice. He rejected appetite and anger to be choice on the ground that it is the characteristics of irrational creatures. More over appetite is contrary to choice and again it is related to the pleasant and the painful where as choice relates neither to the both.

Even wish is not a choice. One can wish for anything; even impossible where as he says choice is made only within the boundary of human ability to achieve them. On top of that wish relates to end and choice to that of means. Based on these discussions he says it is not even opinion. Like wish, one can

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 1110a. 5-15
have opinion about or of impossible. Opinion is distinguished by its falsity or truth where as choice is by its badness or goodness. We choose nothing blindly. We do so only when we think it would be good and opinion is something to do with which we are not well acquainted or familiar.

Now if choice, appetite, anger, wish and opinion are not voluntary, the next question that he posed is, could it be what has been decided on by previous deliberation?\textsuperscript{46} This question is raised on the ground that choice involves a rational principle and thought. He limits the subject of deliberation to what a sensible man can do so; that too within his power and can be done. What could be deliberated by a fool or a mad man and by a normal being about impossibility are discarded.

We deliberate on those things that are within the human reach. That too, not about the end but we deliberate about the means. The end is assumed. In order to achieve that particular end we deliberate on all the possible means. If there is more than one, we go for the mean that would be easiest and still give us the best product. If only man could unearth such means then, he chooses to follow according to that pattern to get the best possible end. From this it is clear that choice is something to do with deliberation and that too with the means; that which is within the power of man. Based on this position, he says "Now the exercise of the virtues is concerned with means. Therefore virtue is also in our own power, and so too vice"\textsuperscript{47}. The point that he wants to deduce from this stand is that man with his ability to exercise his reason, acts or does things knowingly or voluntarily. We simply cannot say that as long as man does something noble he does it voluntarily and when he does base, does so involuntarily. This he says will contradict or deny the fact that there is a moving principle in man. This is to say that if such principle is there whatever one does should be in one or the other voluntary acts and be responsible for the act unless he does so under compulsion or out of ignorance.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, 1112a.15
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, 1113b. 5-6
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 1113b.1-1114b. 25
The approach of Aristotle is akin to that of existentialist here. He holds that man does not become unjust or self indulgent involuntarily. Prior to this state he has within him the power what to do and what not to do. Equipped with such power, he says if a person cannot know that a state of character is produced by the exercise of activities on the particular objects it is a sign of a thoroughly senseless person. There are occasions where the assumed end appears good and later turns out to be bad. To such kind, he says one's state of mind or by being a person of certain kind determines the appearance of an object either to be good or bad. In either case the acts become voluntary and the failure to grasp the essence of the object is due to certain states of character in men, otherwise the state of nature is alike to everyone.

Virtues

Now he focuses on what the virtues are, with what things are they concerned and how they are concerned with them. First he talks about courage. It has already been discussed before with regard to what courage is. It is a mean that falls between two extremes. The act of courageness is the result of a choice aptly taken by man depending upon the circumstances. This is so by virtue of the disposition in man a certain character; otherwise it might lead him to either of the two extremes. He discusses five kinds of courage.

1. The first is that of the citizen-soldier. This kind of act is undertaken/performed in a given situation as a loyalty to the law imposed on them otherwise penalty awaits them. And it is also so for the possibility of honour if they win.

2. The second is experience with regard to particular facts. This kind is well exhibited by a professional war soldiers in facing the dangers. When one is well equipped with proper knowledge gained through experiences the loop holes can be detected easily and can fight easily, as though you are fighting against unarmed soldiers.
3. The third is passion. By passion he means the soul power that can stir up man, to be like a wounded wild beast in times of dangers.

4. The fourth is sanguine people. This, he says closely resembles a brave man. It is so, because of the occasional success in the past. It builds up their confidence.

5. The last is ignorant people. They appear to be or are brave, just because they do not know the ground reality of the fact or situation that confronts them.

Those five kinds are the character of a brave man and thought to be brave man. Courage of a man is tested with regard to his reaction with the feeling of confidence and fear. But of this two, it is concerned more with fear. It is harder to face fear than to stay away from pleasant things. A man is praised justly for being able to cope with fear as it should be and still be himself. This kind of act is possible for it is noble to do so and the act of such act is pleasant and honour.

The next virtue that he discussed is temperance. It seems to belong to the irrational parts (of the soul). One thing is certain of temperance that it is a mean with regard to pleasures. But the question is a pleasure of either of the body or of the soul. He denies it to be that of the soul on the ground that whoever derives pleasure by attending to a things related to soul or mind, for instance, love of honour or learning or hearing etc, delights in those things that they loved. It does not in any case affect the body and people who are concern with such pleasures are not called temperate man. Based on this point he claims that it must be then that of the bodily pleasures. He further claims that it does not encompass the whole of bodily pleasures. For instance, people who delight in vision of objects like colours, shapes, paintings, or hearing are not called temperate.

Temperance is concerned with the kind of pleasures that are shared even by animals. They are touch and taste. Of these two, it is even more to do with touch than that of taste. So it is mostly of the pleasure that is derived from
touch that determines man to be either temperate or otherwise. Temperate men are those who are in control of their urge for pleasant things and are not even pained by the lack of it. This is possible as long as the appetitive element in man harmonizes with the rational principle. The temperate man longs for the things that he ought, as he ought and when he ought.

The next virtue that he discusses is liberality which is said to be concerned with wealth. The wealth that he talks of is not in its own state but in its uses. It is in the context of giving and taking. It is more so with giving. It is a mean between prodigality and meanness. They are said to be excesses and defects in dealing with wealth. By prodigal, he not only refers to the excessive use of money or wealth but goes further and says that it leads to wastage of one’s substance and as such ruins oneself. And by meanness he refers to a man whose care for wealth exceeds than, what he ought to be.

The liberal man of Aristotle is someone whose actions with regard to wealth are based on the following conditions. He takes from the right sources not as a noble thing to do so but as a necessity. He will have something to give to others. He gives to others because it is a noble act. He does this rightly not by giving to anyone and everyone but to the right people at the right time the right amount. The liberal man is not pained by such giving for it is a noble act. It is the interest of a liberal man to give. In this process excessive giving is one of the prominent characteristics of such man. As a result he leaves a very little amount for himself. This is so because it is not his nature to look after only himself. He used the term liberality to refer to the state of character of the giver. So he says that it is not in the number or the amount of the giving that is accounted for being a liberal man. Even if one gives more or less, depending upon the availability of one’s wealth, if one takes and gives from the right sources to the right person rightly, such act itself will constitute to be a liberal man.

49 Ibid, 1118b. 30f
50 Ibid, 1119b. 15
Following liberality is pride. The term itself gives the impression to be concerning with great things. But when we say great things it can mean anything. So he tries to specify in what sense this great things has to do with regard to pride. To quote him “Now the man is thought to be proud who thinks himself worthy of great things, being worthy of them; for he who does so beyond his deserts is a fool, but no virtuous man is foolish or silly”. He says that the proud man’s claim of greatness is extreme but he does so within his power to exercise or execute them and not hollow or shallow claim. On the other hand there are some people who think of themselves to be great in contrary to their reach or out of the realm of their ability to act as they claim so. To such people, he termed them as vain. There is another type of man who falls short of a proud man. He called them unduly humble man. They are so on the ground that they are worthy of great things yet undermine or under estimate themselves or having a very low self-esteem which in turns makes himself unworthy of being himself.

He says that proud man is concerned with honour. This is the chief end of a proud man. But the condition is that, it should be within his reach or should be worthy of it. In addition to honour he says, a truly proud man must have a quality of goodness and nobility in them. With all these things then, pride, he says, is a kind of crown of virtues. One cannot be called the ‘proud man’ and yet be lacking honour, nobility and goodness. If only one could fulfill these things, he would be entitled to call a truly proud man. So without these virtues even if one claims great things and are even worthy of it, it does not lead to being a proud man in its truest sense.

With regard to ambitious and unambitious he says, man is sometimes praised as a lover of noble things, and such people are known as a moderate and self controlled respectively. But the mean between these two has no particular name. As the name itself suggest, being ambitious the possibility of desiring honour more than what it should be is there. Likewise unambitious too implies that one’s desire for honour may fall short from what one ought to be.

51 Ibid, 1123b. 1f
He suggests that between excess and defect there is an intermediate. So the mean between ambitiousness and unambitiousness, is something relative to each other. We may call such mean as right ambition as given in the table.

Good temper is another virtue which he says to concern with anger. He gives no name for the deficiency in anger but to that of excess he calls it as 'irascibility'. Even the mean of anger has no particular name so he calls it as good temper. In short one can say good tempered man, according to Aristotle, is someone who gets angry when ought to with the right people at the right time within the right duration. To such man it is praised for acting rightly. Deficiency or excess (spiritlessness) of these conditions fall short to qualify to be entitled as a good tempered man. At this point one may ask the degree up to what extent one can go about it. To this he admits that it is not an easy task to give a definite definition of it. So he says it all depends on the particular facts and on perception.

Man is a social being. The daily chores of life are carried out with interchange of words and deeds. In doing these, there are some people who have the habit of praising someone without opposing in any occasion as if it is his duty to do so. To such people he named it as obsequious. Contrary to this, is the type of people who would oppose anything and everything without taking into account of the pain that they may incur on others by doing such things. He called them churlish and contentious. Now he opines that there should be a mean between these two extremes. Friendship comes closure to this, but he denies to be it, on the ground that the mean of such kind is not determined by passion or affection for the associates that one have but by being a certain kind of person.

The kind of person who would follow the mean between obsequious, and churlish and contentious, according to Aristotle is someone who would socialize with others in the right way particularly, with reference to things that are honourable and expedient. It is not based on the objective of causing someone pain or pleasure. His prior concern is the pain and pleasure of the social life. If any of his action is bound to result in an unpleasant manner, he is ever ready to
withdraw from it and do the other way that would comply with what is honourable and expedient in the right manner as it should be. His action need not be dictated by the motive of giving pain or pleasure but based on the stated conditions. His action could lead to either pain or pleasure. Even if little pain is inflicted by his action, it is done so for the sake of future pleasure. In short, we can say that such a man is one, who is sincere to his words and deeds; for it is always said to be guided by things that are honourable and expedient.

After giving an account of a person who would follow the mean between obsequious, and churlish and contentious in respect of social life, he turns to a truthful man. He contrasted this with a boastful man. A truthful man is one who follows the mean. He is truthful in his words and deeds. It is so, not because of his allegiance to any authority but his character is such. He says a lover of truth, will be more truthful even if he is under certain condition, that is demanded from him to be so and so. So such man is worthy of praise. On the other hand, boastful man is one who claims more glory than he deserves or even those which he has not achieved. And the mock-modest man is one, who does not claim even what he has and understates things. For Aristotle, truthful and boastful and mock-modest are opposed to each other. His point in this matter is, truthfulness is a virtue in concern with social activities.

Life consists of rest and activity. Leisure and amusement are part of it. With respect to this acts of man, he opines that there is an ideal way which is neither excess nor defect. There are people who cuts joke without considering the interest of others, just to make people laugh. To such type of people Aristotle named it as vulgar buffoons. There is other type of people who would neither joke nor listen to others. Such type of people is called boorish and unpolished. Different from these two extremes is a type which he calls ready-witted or well-bred man and even tactful man. Such type of man is said to have certain kind of character that helps them to adapt with the given situation. They are marked by their tactfulness. So whatever they say and listen are things that are appropriate to what is good. The way of such man differs from that of vulgar and unpolished. Unlike the vulgar buffoon, who, in order to raise laughter does
not spare others and even himself. The well-bred man in his jokes, or listening or hearing would not turn to something that is abusive in nature as though he is forbidden by the law even if it is not such.

The last three means which have been just described are concerned with words and deeds of man with his fellow being. Truthful man is concerned with truth, and tactful man or refined man and the means that lie between obsequious and churlish and contentious are concerned with pleasantness.

The next question that he raised is about justice and injustice. For Aristotle, justice is a virtue—a sort of character trait, not a state of being. It is as much a part of one's motives as much as one's behaviour. If justice is a virtue then there must be some kind of mean. Thus it must be some sort of intermediate act, between some two extremes in some sorts of circumstances. He writes;

"We see that all men mean by justice that kind of state of character which makes people disposed to do what is just and makes them act justly and wish for what is just; and similarly by injustice that state which makes them act unjustly and wish for what is unjust". 52

When thinking about justice, we must remember that justice primarily regards the external act whereby we render to someone what is due to them. Unlike the other cardinal virtues, justice is not primarily concerned with the inner disposition of the man who is acting, but justice demands that man's actions in civil society conform themselves to the right in civil, social, economic, and political affairs. According to him there are two forms of justice, first justice as lawfulness and the second, justice as fairness. Justice as lawfulness aims at the common good of society, i.e., the production and preservation of the happiness of the whole community. A system of good laws requires us to act in a morally virtuous way, i.e., to exercise all of the moral virtues, and it forbids all immoral conduct. In its general sense, it is equivalent to the observance of law. As such it is the same thing as virtue, differing only insofar as virtue exercises

52 Ibid, 1129a. 6-9
the disposition simply in the abstract, and justice applies it in dealings with people. Justice as fairness has two branches distributive justice and corrective justice.

Distributive justice is concern with honors and rewards and the like among citizens by the State, and of private property by contract and agreement according to the merits of the recipients. Thus, if things are to be divided based on some property, each individual should receive a portion proportional to their possession of that property which results in an equality of ratios. If possessions are to be distributed between two unequals, the ratio of the distribution must equal the ratio of the merits of the two unequals. This is a just equality. In other words, it is relative to the persons involved; and the objects to be distributed are divided proportionately to the merits of each person.

Corrective justice takes no account of the position of the parties concerned, but simply secures equality between the two by taking away from the advantage of the one and adding it to the disadvantage of the other. This justice governs personal transactions between individuals, whether mutually agreeable (voluntary) or forced upon a particular party (involuntary). Corrective justice is concerned only with restoring a balance which has been disturbed. The distribution is a question not of equality, but of right proportion.

He points out that there are three moral states to be avoided by man. They are vice, incontinence and brutishness. Their contraries are virtue, continence and as far as brutish is concern there is no exact term. He suggests that it must be godlike man or super human virtue.

Now he contrasted continence with endurance and incontinence with softness. It is thought of continence and endurance as good and praise worthy, and incontinence and softness as bad and blame worthy. With the help of rationality, the continent man refrains from his appetites that are bad and an incontinent, though he knows that it is bad, yet, does them as he is led by his passion. Sometime the temperate man is also call continent though some opposed it. And some thinks that self-indulgent and incontinent to be identical.
but some distinguish them. Even practically wise people are said to be incontinent sometimes. Even in the context of anger, honour and gain, men are said to be incontinent.

Now he posed a question how a man who judges things rightly could behave incontinently.\textsuperscript{53} This question is posed against the view that claims ignorance to be the cause of vice. In this context he picks Socrates "for Socrates was entirely opposed to the view in question, holding that there is no such thing as incontinence; no one, he said, when he judges acts against what he judges best- people act so only by reason of ignorance".\textsuperscript{54} If it is due to ignorance, his next question is, what could be the manner of ignorance. There are some people who agree to Socrates as far as knowledge is concern but when it comes to appetites they say, that instead of knowledge the incontinent man is led by his opinion. But he rejects opinion to be the reason behind the failure to resist the appetites. If that is so he asks, could it be practical wisdom that makes man behaves incontinently? But this he out rightly says is absurd as it is the part of practically wise man to do things that are best. Moreover they are said to posses other virtues as well.

Next he raises several questions with respect to continent and incontinent man. Do incontinent men act knowingly or not, and in what sense knowingly, what sorts of objects they are concerned with. Are they differentiated on the basis of the object or their attitude or by both? and, if they are concern with any and every object or not. The incontinent man in the unqualified sense is not concern with any and every object but those concerns the self-indulgent man. He further states that, they are not the same because the self-indulgent man always thinks that he ought to run after the present pleasure but the incontinent man does not think that he ought to, but yet he pursues it.

He says that even if man have knowledge, it is possible to act incontinently when appetite is present in us. As appetite can move each of the

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 1145b. 22
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, 1145b. 25-23
bodily parts. So the incontinent man behaves incontinently under the influence of appetites. In such case, he opined that the state of knowledge that the incontinent man posses must be like those of a man asleep, mad or drunk. So the state of knowledge of incontinent man in such case means no more than the language uttered by actors on the stage.\textsuperscript{55} The object which concerns the continent and endurance person and incontinent and soft persons are pleasure and pain.

Incontinence, he further states, in case of anger, it is less disgraceful than that of appetites. This is so because he opines that anger listens to an argument in a sense, where as in respect of appetites, if any argument or perception signifies that an object is pleasant, they out rightly followed it.

Some pleasures are necessary and some are not. It is necessary as long as it does not excess or is deficient. With respect to appetites and pains the case holds true. So the man who runs after the excess of pleasant things by his choice just for the sake of their own and not for any other result whatever, is a self indulgent. The man who is deficient in such pursuit is the opposite of self indulgent and the intermediate of such pursuit is temperate. As such the self indulgent man cannot repent and cannot be cured since he does so by his choice.\textsuperscript{56} Based on this he says that self indulgent man is even worse than the incontinent. But with regard to the incontinent man, he says that the possibility to repent is there. The self indulgent man is a kind of permanent sickness and the incontinent man an intermittent badness.

He further states that incontinence and vice are of different kind; for vice is unconscious of itself where as incontinence is not. Incontinent man is better than the man who has rational principle without abiding by it. So he clearly says that incontinence is not vice. Though the incontinent man pursues (not on conviction) the bodily pleasure, he preserves the first principle.\textsuperscript{57} That is why they are not bad without qualification. He further points out that a practically

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, 1147b. 5-10  
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, 1150a. 20-25  
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, 1151a. 20-30
wise man cannot be incontinent. This is so because the practically wise man is good in respect of character, such a man has practical wisdom not just by virtue of knowing but by being able to act. The incontinent man is not able to act the way practically wise man acts. The incontinent man is said to be like the man asleep or drunk. He is half-wicked but not a criminal as his purpose is good and he does not act of malice aforethought. He points out about the two types of incontinent man. One type does not deliberate at all and the other deliberates but does not follow according to what he has deliberated. That is why he says that the incontinent man is like a city which passes all the right decrees and has good laws, but makes no use of them.  

The continent man is said to follow according to the decision he takes where as the incontinent lesser than most man. With respect to the types of incontinent man he says that the type of man who does not deliberate at all and are incontinent through habituation are more curable than those man who deliberate yet never follow according to the decision they made and are incontinent by nature. This is so, as a matter of fact that habit is easier to change than one's nature.

**Friendship**

He gives friendship a very prominent place among the hierarchy of the ways of life. Survival of man without friends is unthinkable. In every walks of life friends plays a vital role. From young man to the old they need friends for one reason or the other. For him friends are the sources of refuge in time of misfortune and power for many. It is considered to enhance the power to think and act. If men are friends, he opined that the need for justice would not arise as it holds the state together and the law-giver care even more when it comes under the umbrella of friends. This is why he said, 'the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality'.  But most of all he said that friendship is a virtue. It is one of the most necessary traits and noble things.

---

58 Ibid, 1152a. 20-24
59 Ibid, 1155a. 25
He addressed the question on how friendship is built. Either any two people can, or cannot become friends, if they are wicked or if there are more than one species of friendship. In order to find out the kinds of friendship he suggests that one should know the object of love. People love that which is only loveable. By loveable he means that which is good, pleasant and useful. Now his query is, do men love the good and pleasant or what is good and pleasant for them? The love that involves in friendship is mutual. The love has to be reciprocated or recognized. So if two people are friends they must mutually recognize each other that both bear good will and best wishes for each other. Such kind of love does not love the good for themselves or for the sake of good or pleasure but because of good and pleasant that they acquire from each other. The kind of friendship that is built on the love for the good and pleasant or useful for themselves without being recognized by each other, he calls it as incidental friendship. Such friendship does not last.

The kind of friendship that is built with the motive of utility is found mostly among old people and the pleasant mostly between the young people, as they are guided by emotion and so they run after pleasures. So depending upon the object of love, the span of friendship too depends. Those that are based on usefulness, dissolves the friendship right after its motive is achieved.

He says, the perfect friendship is found between the two people who are good and alike in virtue. Who are good in themselves and wish well to each other, such kind of friendship last as long as they are good. Good without qualification. Goodness is a lasting thing. In such kind of friendship either the good or the pleasant or the useful is not wishes from a single party or is not one sided but a mutual wish. It is permanent because all the requirement of friendship is found in it. But he further says that such type of people are rare to find so is the friendship; for to have such kind of friendship that has been discussed takes time to achieve.

---

60 Ibid, 1156a-1157a. 1ff
He says that there is another kind of friendship where inequality is involved between the two parties, e.g. between parents and children, elder to younger, husband to wife, ruler to subject. In such contexts inequality prevails as the virtue and the functions of each party are different. So their love and friendship is different as well. In such relation, neither of the sides gets the same treatment from the other, nor ought one to look for it. Even then, if both the sides offer what they ought to, the kind of friendship will be abiding and excellent. In a friendship, where inequality implies, even the love should be proportionate; the better more loved and the other accordingly. If such proportion can be maintained, the sense of equality, which is the characteristics of friendship, emerges even in such kind of friendship. He made a remark that the form of equality in respect of act of justice and friendship is different. In acts of justice the primary form of equality is that, which is in proportion to merit, but in friendship the qualitative equality is primary.

He opined that most people wish to be loved instead of loving due to ambitiousness. For this reason people love to flatter in order to draw the attention of other people especially to the higher position. So that they may be, honoured or favoured by the flattered. But he said that the right approach to friendship lies not in being loved but in loving. He cites the instance of a mother whose son has been given to someone to be brought up. She delights in her son in so far as her son prospers well even if she is not loved by him the way she does or even if she cannot be the way a mother should be to her child. So Aristotle says that it is loving that constitutes the virtue of friendship rather than being loved. In this way, even among the unequal the bond of friendship can be build. This is the only way that can equalize amongst the unequal.

He says that in every community, it is thought to have some form of justice and friendship. They are said to be concerned with the same objects and it is exhibited between the same persons. In every community people address their fellow man as friends. The boundary of their friendship and that of justice between them lies in the way in how they associate with each other. It is the common interest that brings people together to be friends. But even this
notion of common interest is not same in every case of friendship. For instance, between comrade to comrade and parents to children. Based on this, there are acts that differ according to the kind of friendship. (for example, between A and B, doing X may be just and friendly but it may not be in other case). For this reason he says that friend and justices exists between the same persons and have an equal extension.\footnote{Ibid, 1160a. 5-9}

He points out that political community seem to have come together aiming at some particular advantage that will provide the need for the purposes of life. Likewise, every other forms of communities exists with common interest and common goal and so they seem to be the part of the political community. Thus the particular kinds of friendship correlate to the particular kinds of community.

According to Aristotle there are three kinds of constitutions namely monarchy, aristocracy and timocratic, and an equal number of deviation-forms namely tyranny, oligarchy and democracy. The intensity of friendship involved in each constitution is in accordance to the extent of justices. In such constitutions the justice and friendship exists between persons concern is different for both parties. The whole notion of friendship and justice is in accordance with proportion to merit. Such kind of friendship and justice is found to be involved in the form of monarchy, aristocracy and timocratic. And in lesser extent in those, contrary or deviation forms. But in deviation forms, he says, in democracy it exists more because every citizen is said to be equal as such the sense of community is more.

It has been pointed out that there are three kinds of friendship. Among those kinds, he says that complaints and criticism would crop up with regard to the friendship of utility. The simple reason behind this fact is that each side or party expects more from the other side. Each feels that they are not treated justly as deserved. In short the reciprocal is not proportionate.
In friendship differences crops up when the desired response is not achieved or reciprocated by the other parties. In such case it is equivalent to getting nothing. In the community of friendship, there is no contract or bond that one has to fulfill the conditions so laid down. So in many cases, each side may not get the desired and deserved advantage from each party. Now the question is who should be responsible for this imbalance; either the one who renders favor or the favoured. Instead of holding either party responsible for such differences, he says that as is the case with the gods and parents it is enough to give what one can.62

At times a situation arises at a particular time where one is confronted with dilemmas; either one has to prefer one class or the other. He says that one need not prefer in all things to the same person as one does not offer sacrifice, whatever one has to Zeus (the supreme god of ancient mythology). "We ought to render different things to parents, brother, comrades, and benefactors, we ought to render to each class what is appropriate and becoming."63 It is an obvious and plain fact that in such a kind of association, there is no common measure that can measure the worth of one's act either as appropriate or proportionate of one's service, which is rendered to either of those mentioned class. This is so because of many variations involved in magnitude, nobility and necessity of the service. In such dilemma his answer is that, one should always try to select the most appropriate based on relation and virtue, and usefulness.

Unanimity is also considered by Aristotle to be a friendly relation, especially in the context of political affairs. Such unanimity is said to be possessed by good man. They are said to be unanimous both in themselves and with one another. They wish for what is just and better for every citizen.

Another question that he puts up is whether one should love oneself more or others. People who do everything for their own sake are criticized and despised by their people and they are called lover of self. On the other hand, good man acts for the sake of honor. Such type of man is said to act for their

62 Ibid, 1164b.5
63 Ibid, 1165a. 15-18
friend's sake and if it need be they even sacrifice their own interest. With regard to those who love themselves more than others, he said, it is not to be surprised; for this is one of the common factors with everyone. We consider a person as our best friend if he complies with our own wishes. On this ground one is one's own best friend and so ought to love oneself best. In order to justify this point, now he focuses on the sense of the terms 'lover of self'. If this term is taken in its disgraceful sense, referring to those who accredit to themselves the greater share in everything, the claim that one should love oneself more than others is not the right approach in understanding the true notion of friendship. But on the other hand, if man is always eager to act justly, temperately or in accordance with virtues and as a whole to consider all his understanding for something honourable cause, such a man would not be called lover of self or be blamed.

He says that a good man should be a lover of self. Such a man is said to do what is noble and would share what he have and do what he can with all his possible efforts and would even give his own life for a noble end. It is only in this sense that man can be a lover of self and not in the disgraceful sense which most men do.

The next question that he puts forward is whether the happy man would need a friend or not. This question is raised because some believes that when one is supremely happy and self sufficient, the need for friendship does not arise. He cited one saying "...when fortune is kind, what need of friends?" Now he says that it is strange not to ascribe to a friend which is thought the greatest of external goods to the happy man when the other good qualities are assigned to him. Men being a political creature need others and so he says that such a man too needs friends and not a solitude and secluded life. It has been pointed out that happiness is a virtuous activity; man to live a pleasant and active life needs friends; for this would add to their own goodness, and for their continuous life of activities through friends.

64 Ibid, 1169b. 5-10
According to Aristotle, a virtuous friend seems to be naturally desirable for a virtuous man. He said this because there is a likeness in both the sides in everything that they do. The thing which is good by nature is good and pleasant for the virtuous man. He opines that life consists in the act of perceiving and thinking. So in these acts both the virtuous friend and virtuous man shares, and so one need the other. This is the reason why the happy man needs a friend who is virtuous and not a wicked and corrupt or pained man.

With regard to number of friends that one should keep, he says that it is not possible for man to have too many friends because the need that arises between friendships may not be able to fulfill by each sides. For this reason he suggests that not too many but if there are friends with whom you can live together it is more than enough than to live with very little or excess and face the problem to cope with each and every situation that would crop up from friendship.

He further asked if one needs friend more in time of good fortune or in bad fortune. His simple answer to this question is, one need friends at all times for one reason or the other. Though the services rendered to us differs according to the circumstances and the need of the hour of friends. It is through good friends that the activities of life are made better and pleasant. Good friends mould each other for a better quality of life. Likewise, friends of bad man, becomes evil even more in their activities for they are alike in such pursuits.

These are the virtues that are acquired through the kind of training one receives in school. But someone can have great "book smarts" and still be very irrational in how they conduct their lives: they are led by irrational desires, uncontrolled emotions, etc. Their animal soul is not subject to the guidance of reason. Such a person lacks what Aristotle calls moral virtue.
Pleasures

Aristotle opines that the subject matter of pleasure and pain fall within the scope of a political philosopher as he is concerned with the end that is either good or bad. He further states that moral virtue and vice too concerns with pleasure and pain. He gives several views regarding as to what pleasure is and is not.

1. No pleasure is good in itself or incidentally since they are not the same. The reasons given for this view are:

   a) Every pleasure is only a perceptible process and not an end.
   b) A temperate man avoids pleasures.
   c) A practically wise man seeks not the pleasant things but that is free from pain.
   d) The pleasures are hindrance to thought especially when one is absorbed in it.
   e) Pleasure is not an art where as good is.
   f) Children and brutish runs after pleasures.

2. Some thinks that some pleasures are good but most of them are bad. The reasons behind this view are some pleasures are actually base and disgraceful, and even harmful.

3. All the pleasures may be good but it cannot be the best thing in the world. The reason for this view is that it is not an end but a process.

   But he further points out that the views of people just mentioned, that pleasure is not a good can be refuted by the following considerations.

   A) a. The term good has two senses, i.e. natural constitution and state of being. Something may be considered as bad if it is taken without qualification but it may not be so for a particular person. Even if it may be the case, it will not be bad only for a particular time or period though not without qualification.
b. As good is understood in two senses one is the activity and the other state of being, when it is taken in the sense of activity, he says, there are some pleasures that does not involve pain or appetite. He cites contemplation as an example.

c. Pleasures are neither process nor do they involve process but are activities and ends. Pleasures are not derived by being a virtue of something but only by exercising some faculty. For these reasons he said that pleasure is the activity of the nature state and should not be called as ‘perceptible’ process. He said some people thought that activity is a process; for they took the strict sense of good where as activity is not a process.

B. The practical wisdom or any other state of being is not harmed or disturbed by the pleasure arising from it but only the foreign pleasure. Instead the pleasure of thinking or learning induces to think or learn even more and more.

C. To the view that no pleasure is the product of an art, he says that there is no art of any activity either, but only of the corresponding faculty.

In his following discussion he points out that pleasure is not bad as has been leveled by some people, rather pleasure is identified by him as happiness when all man’s disposition is an unimpeded activities.\(^65\) This is why he says happy man needs the goods of the body and the external goods i.e. those of fortune. Of course he further states that even with regard to fortune if it is excess it no longer constitutes to be good but becomes a hindrance to a happy life. The very fact that both the brutes and men pursues after pleasure indicates that it is somehow the chief good. He says that everything has something divine in them by nature. So if pleasure, which is the activity of our faculty, is not good then the happy man will not have a pleasant life; for if pleasure is not good the happy man’s life will not be of any difference than that of anyone else.

\(^{65}\) Ibid, 1153b. 5-15
With regard to bodily pleasure, against the view that holds to be bad/pain and should be avoided, he says that the problem lies not in avoiding to what is excess but in avoiding all. This is because the alternative to excess of pleasure is not pain. But it is so only to those who run after the excess.

Just by refuting against those who holds pleasure to be bad is not enough. So he tries to find out the mistake that makes people to think of pleasure as bad. First pleasure removes the pain, when man is in excessive pain; they go for bodily pleasure excessively as a remedy. This kind of pursuit is said to give intense feeling to the pursuer contrary to pain. Some of the activities that involve pleasure belongs to bad nature, either congenital or due to bad habit. Further some people pursued bodily pleasure at any cost because they cannot enjoy any other pleasures whatsoever to quench their thirst. In doing so they become self indulgent and bad. These are the reasons that makes people think of pleasure as not good. But he says that those pleasures that do not admit of excess are not painful and thus are the kind of pleasure, pleasant by nature and so they are not incidentally good. By pleasant incidentally he is referring to the act of cures through some action of the part that remain healthy and by naturally pleasant he is referring to the things that arouse or stimulate the action of the healthy nature.

In winding up the discussion about continence and incontinence, and pleasure and pains he points out that life does not constitute only of pleasant things but also of evil. But if the balance can be maintained between these two elements, he opines that there would be nothing as painful or pleasant. He assumed that god is in this state of equilibrium- the activity of immobility. He sums up by saying that the thing that needs to be changed is the vicious nature of man since it is neither simple nor good.66

He says pleasure seems to be closely connected with human nature. Pains and pleasures are part of life. Of these two men chooses what is pleasant and avoids pain in every possible way. One should be well equipped

66 Ibid, 1154b. 25-30
with knowledge regarding what to enjoy and what to hate. But even with regard to pleasure not everyone is after it. Some people thinks that pleasure is bad because one is enslaved by it while others claims it to be good.67

For those people who claimed pleasure to be good do so, on the ground that it is the object of choice for both the rational and irrational. They say that object which is mostly chosen by most people is the greatest good. When pleasure is added with any other goods, for example, just or temperate action, it makes even more worthy of choice. But against this view, he cited about the argument of Plato who claims that pleasure is not good; for no good can be more desirable by any other goods added to it.

Now he says that those who opposed to the view, that which all things aim at is not good, are in a way talking non-sense. For the thing that is desired is desire by the intelligent creature. He said some thinkers assumed good to be perfect where as a movement and coming into being are imperfect.68 They put pleasure to be under the category which involve movements and coming into being and so it is imperfect. He says that these thinkers’s view with regard to pleasure as movements and coming into being is incorrect.

According to Aristotle, pleasure is like seeing. In the act of seeing, he says, there is nothing lacking at any moment that has to be completed by the later stage in its form. He writes "For it is a whole, and at no time can one find a pleasure whose form will be completed if the pleasure lasts longer".69 Therefore pleasure is not a movement. In movement there is certain duration before it takes to reach the state of its complete form. From the beginning to the end, there are parts which are incomplete, different in kind from the whole and even from each other. In other words it is not complete at any and every given time. But with regard to pleasure he says the form is complete at any and every time.

67 Ibid, 1172a. 30-35
68 Ibid, 1173a. 30ff
69 Ibid, 1174a. 15-20
From this he concludes that movement and pleasure must not be the same. He includes pleasure among the things that are whole and complete.

Again he says that those thinkers who claims pleasure to be movements or coming into being are not right because movement or coming into being can be assigned only to things that are divisible and not to the whole. So pleasure is not either of them; for it is a whole.

Every sense is said to be active in relation to its object. Pleasure is said to involve in respect of sense, thought and contemplation. The activity between them is said to be most complete and pleasantest when the particular organ is in its best-condition and the corresponding object is finest or the worthiest. Pleasure is said to complete the activity as an end in the same way if both remains the same and are related to each other in the same way.

Now his next question is, if that is the case, how no one is continuously pleased? His answer is anything that is to do with human cannot be active at all times. So, as pleasure also involves activity it certainly cannot be continuous. So no one can be pleased continuously. But as a matter of fact, life is an activity and this activity is competed by pleasure that is desired. So whoever chooses pleasure they do so with a good reason as it completes life. But it should be clear that pleasure is only the outcome of activities without which it would not arise.

He says that pleasures too have different kinds. Even the activities of thought and that of senses too differ among themselves in kind. Each pleasure is said to be attached with its sources- activity and this activity is completed by the pleasures proper to it. He says ‘what intensifies a thing is proper to it’. So if, in one’s activity, there is any pleasure that comes from other sources which is not proper to it, it impedes the activity. Now the point that he wants to drive home is that if one tries or is engaged in anything that is unpleasant to oneself

---

70 Ibid, 1174b. 5
71 Ibid, 1174b. 15-30
it would destroy one's own activity. Since the pleasure is not proper to the activity, it is bad. Only those pleasures proper to its activity are good.

He points out that some pleasures which are thought to be proper to its activity may not hold true to everyone. It may be pleasant to some but painful to others. In such case he said the conditions to be accepted would be only according to what appears to a good man. Though, those things which are disgraceful should not be taken as pleasure. Now he said that the pleasure that is proper to the activities of perfect and supremely happy man in its strict sense will be pleasure proper to man. Other activities would be either in secondary or in fractional way.72

Happiness: Internal and External Goods

So far what we have discussed is only about the virtuous activity of the soul in harmony with the rational principle. Definitely, he did not focus only on the aspects of the internal goods; for he knows that man cannot be happy with what it is in itself or in other words man cannot become complete or chief goods with only internal goods. So he says that external goods are also one of the components in constituting a man to achieve happiness- eudaimonia. The external goods that he refer to are friends, social status, money, riches, political power, beauty etc,. But these things are considered as an addition or secondary to the virtuous activity of the soul in accordance with the rational principle in man's endeavour to achieve the chief good. Happiness results from a rational life focused on the pursuit of excellence in addition to living in accordance with excellent reasoning, human beings also need “external prosperity” or “circumstantial security”

Human beings have a natural potential for moral virtue, and this potentiality is actualized through early-life moral habituation and through the (life-long?) practice and performance of morally virtuous actions. Why does Aristotle consider the life of intellectual excellence (at the level of theoretical reasoning) to result in the highest degree of happiness? Why does the life of

72 Ibid, 1176a. 25
theoretical reasoning bring us closest to the gods (or God)? Why does the life of moral excellence and practical reasoning result in only a secondary form of happiness?

Based on what has been discussed, he posed another question. If happiness is to be acquired, does it come as a divine providence or by chance? He did not right away claim that it is not a god sent, rather he says, even if it is not god-given there are certain training or learning, which by nature are god-like and so are virtuous. But even this process of training and learning are only a mere addition and with regard to chance he did not leave a room for it.

The next point that he discussed is about the span of life with regard to happiness. Man's life is bound to have ups and down; success and failure, which is a part of life. If a man is to be called happy when he is successful and not happy in times of failure the same man will be happy as well as unhappy at the same time. In the same way, the question, whether we should call a man happy, when he is still alive or after death, is also addressed by him on the ground of man's fortune. But like those training and learning the fortune of man-success or failure- are just considered as an addition. They cannot over-rule the virtuous activities because they are not permanent as the virtuous activities. Even during failure or being hit by misfortune, through nobility a virtuous man can bear it and can still be happy.

We can call a man happy when he is still alive; for happiness is something final and complete. The fortune of man and that of friends or descendants too, do not share the same character as that of happiness. So on account of the misfortune that may befall on man in the later stage or fortune of friend or even descendant cannot affect the happy man.

Now he tries to find out if happiness is amongst the praised or prized. He out rightly rejected that it cannot be in the form of potentialities, probably based on his definition of happiness. We praise someone for it happens to be of a certain kind and it is always related to something. For e. g. Mr. X is praised for being just but his just act can always be questioned; for it has something to do
further with his actions. It does not become an end in itself but happiness is. So
happiness cannot be among the praised. With regards to prized, he says, a
man is said to be just on the ground that his actions are said to be blessed and
divine and is said to be most god-like. It has no further reference like that of
praises. So happiness must be among the things that are prized and perfect.
This is so, also because it happens to be the first principle. It is because of this,
that we do what we do; for they are prized and divine.

Aristotle claims that all the things that are ends in themselves, also
contribute to a wider end, an end that is the greatest good of all. That good is
eudaimonia. Eudaimonia is happiness, contentment, and fulfillment; it is the
name of the best kind of life, which is an end in itself and a means to live and
fare well. So happiness is said to be the chief end of human nature. Aristotle
defined eudaimonia, or happiness, as "the best possible life." It is not a
disposition because it does not belong to someone who falls asleep all
throughout his life or to someone living the life of plant or to someone who
suffers the greatest misfortune. Happiness is said to be an activity. There are
certain activities which are necessary and desired for the sake of something
else. But with regard to happiness the activity is said to be desired for its own
sake and not for any further ends whatsoever. This is so because happiness
lacks nothing. It is self sufficient. Virtuous actions or activities are said to be of
this nature because doing things that are noble and good is desirable for its
own sake.

In order to understand what kinds of pursuits are really good for human
beings, we need to understand the nature of human happiness. Aristotle rejects
three common conceptions of happiness—pleasure, honor, and wealth.73
Happiness, he says, cannot be identified with any of these things even though
all three may be part of an overall happy life. Pleasure, he says, is found in
satisfying desires—but whether or not we can satisfy our desires is as much up
to chance as it is up to us.

73 Ibid, 1095a. 20ff
If human happiness were nothing more than pleasure, then the attainment of the chief human end wouldn’t be up to us. We’d be “slaves to our desires.” Furthermore, our chief good or the purpose in life would be no different from that of lower animals. But we have already said in the beginning that human beings are different from lower animals. So, something which could be shared even by creatures other than human being cannot be happiness.

He also rejects the idea that the life of honor which is publicly acknowledged, recognized and revered is the happy life. Again, he points out that whether or not we are honoured is not up to us. So, this view of happiness would put the attainment of our chief end in life into the hands of others. He74 furthermore, we do not seek honour purely for its own sake. It is also sought as a measure of our worth. But happiness is sought for its own sake.

Finally, wealth is merely useful—it is not sought for itself but for what it can be used to achieve.75 But what is the chief end that we should seek to attain, making use of wealth and other resources?

Again, he says, happiness seems to lie in pleasant amusement; for people in power spend their leisure in them, but it is not. It would be silly and childish to make an effort and put oneself to work for the sake of amusement; for amusement is a kind of relaxation and relaxation is not an end but people do relax only for the sake of activity. So, happy life lies in virtuous activity and not in amusement. Even a slave is said to be capable of enjoying a bodily pleasure no less than the best man. But for that reason no one ascribes happiness to a slave as far as occupation is concerned. But he clearly points out that happiness does not lie in occupations but rather in virtuous activities.76

If happiness is the outcome of virtuous activity, the virtue concern with it must be the best and the highest of all the virtues. He believes the element of reason in man to be, in a way, divine in its nature. So if the activity of man is guided by reason and is according to the highest virtue, there will be perfect

74 Ibid, 1095b. 25-1096a.35
75 Ibid, 1096a.5-10
76 Ibid, 1176b. 10- 1177a.10
happiness. This activity is none other than contemplative activity. According to him, this activity is the best; for both reason and the objects of reason are the best objects that can be known. And contemplation is the most continuous activity that can be carried out continuously than any other activities. And as far as self-sufficiency is concern, he said, it must belong to contemplative activity.

He says that the activity of philosophic wisdom is the pleasantest of the virtuous activities. Such pursuit is thought to give an extra-ordinary pleasure. For a philosopher as well as any other, man needs the necessaries of life, but even without that a philosopher can contemplate truth. But he admits that it can be better off, if he has his fellow-men. But it is to be noted that philosopher is the most self-sufficient. Now he said that such activity is said to be loved for its own sake and the rest of the activities are desired or loved for further ends. So the activity of reason which is contemplation is superior to any other pursuit in its worth because it does not aim beyond itself. All the other attributes that is assigned to the supremely happy man are apparently there, connected with the activity of reason-contemplation. This is so because even the attributes of happiness is complete.

But he admits that as a man it would be difficult to live according to what it has been discussed. But, as has been said, he believes that there is something divine in human. And because of this divine thing which is superior to the composite nature of man, one can live according to it. That, he said, is the authoritative and better part of man. To quote him "And what we said before will apply now; that which is proper to each thing is by nature best and most pleasant for each thing; for man, therefore, the life according to reason is best and pleasantest, since reason more than anything else is man. This life therefore is also the happiest".

In a secondary degree of life, if we have virtues like just and brave acts, practical wisdom, the liberal man, the temperate man etc, we can be happy. Apart from these virtues he says that one needs external security but not more

77 ibid, 1177a.15ff
78 ibid, 1178a. 5ff
than moral virtue does. Both, a will and a deed of man are important to virtue. But when a man is contemplating, all these external virtues are not required; rather it becomes an obstruction to his activity. But as long as he lives with his fellowmen, doing a virtuous act is required. It is needed in that context only.

He says that perfect happiness lies in contemplative activity. In order to prove what he has asserted, now he introduces about the activity of gods. He says that we assumed gods to be above all beings. But what sort of activity could we ascribe to him. Either acts of justice or of a brave man or liberal acts or temperate man. But to assign all these activities it would be insignificant and unworthy of gods. But nevertheless they are supposed to exist and are active. If action and production are taken away from a living being what is left is contemplation. So he said that the activity of gods must be contemplation. With respect to the activity of human that thing which is related most to this nature of gods must be contemplation. So the extent of happiness lies in so far as the extension of contemplation.

But he made a remark that since we are human, we need external goods; one must be healthy and have food and other things though not in excess. Self-sufficiency does not involve excess. So, whoever exercises his reason and nurtures them well will have the best state of mind and will be closer to gods; for gods are thought to have concerns with the human affairs. If it has, it is reasonable to assume that if man can be in their likeness they would delight most. Such types of man for him are philosophers.

Now he says that knowing alone, about virtue, friendship and pleasure, is not enough. We must try to make use of them and on top of that if there be any room that can make a man to become good we must try in whatever ways. The personality traits that one has accumulated all throughout life might be very difficult to remove from it just by the knowledge of virtue, pleasure and friendship. If there are things which are capable of making a man good, one should be satisfied because it might be in a very little way but the affect of virtue will be there.
With respect to the factors that makes man good, he says, some thinks it to be nature, others habituation and others teaching. With regard to nature, he says, it does not depend on us. And habituation and teaching may not be that powerful to influence everyone. To those who follow passion in their life he says it would not help because they do not listen to teaching or argument. In that case he says that the element similar to virtue must be present already; to love the noble things and to hate the base.

He says that it is difficult to give a right training when they are young because it is not a pleasant thing to be temperate when they are young. In that case, he said it should be enforced by the law to mould the youth towards living a healthy life. Infact he said that this virtues are not meant to be followed only when they are young but for their whole life. To quote him "....for most people obey necessary rather than argument, and punishments rather than the sense of what is noble".79

Now Aristotle's definition of eudaimonia, or happiness, as "the best possible life" may be argued that people today see happiness in much the same way; a challenge arises, however, when one attempts to define what is meant by "the best possible life." Our multicultural society's views are difficult to pin down.

He approached the idea of happiness, or eudaimonia, from the standpoint of what is good for man, in accordance with the meaning of what it is to be 'man'. The discussion of eudaimonia, then, must begin with two definitions: what it is to be man, or man's ergon, and what is correct and proper for man.

This argument is applied to man: man has a function and the good man is the man who performs his function well. Man's function is what is peculiar to him and sets him aside from other beings--reason. Therefore, the function of man is reason and the life that is distinctive of humans is the life in accordance with reason. If the function of man is reason, then the good man is the man who

---

79 Ibid, 1180a. 1-5
reasons well. This is the life of excellence or of eudaimonia. Eudaimonia is the life of virtue--activity in accordance with reason, man's highest function.

Acting virtuously attains moral virtues. The reason for this is because they cannot do wrong or right. The extremes, deficiency and excess, are considered vices while the mean is virtue.

The importance of eudaimonistic virtue ethics is that it reverses the relationship between virtue and rightness. A utilitarian could accept the value of the virtue of kindness, but only because someone with a kind disposition is likely to bring about consequences that will maximize utility. So the virtue is only justified because of the consequences it brings about. In eudaimonist virtue ethics the virtues are justified because they are constitutive elements of eudaimonia, i.e. human flourishing and wellbeing, which is good in itself. In short we can conclude by saying that for Aristotle meaningful life- happiness lies in the performance of virtuous activities, where one's passion and appetites are controlled by reason.