Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics*

Seeks the good at which everyone aims. In other words, what do we aim for its own sake and not for the sake of something else?

Happiness- living well and faring well (*eudaimonia*)

3 types of life:

1. Pleasurable
2. Political
3. Contemplative

Reasons we do anything:

1. Pleasurable
2. Useful
3. Noble

*Honor*: aim of political life; too superficial, depends on others.

*Wealth*: merely useful; for the sake of something else.

We have many ends that we seek (bridge building, feeling good, health, etc.), but the final good that all ends ultimately aim, according to Aristotle, is happiness.

Turns to what is the “human good” that is happiness:

What is the function of man? Not life, nutrition, growth, or perception. The function of man follows or implies a rational principle (because that is the ‘essence’ of man, or that without which man would not be man).

Human good turns out to be the activity of the soul exhibiting excellence, and if there is more than one excellence, in accordance with the best and most complete.

Additions to definition: Life must not be short or lacking fortune.

*Book 2*

Virtue is the excellence of human activity.

2 Kinds of Virtue:

1. Intellectual virtue- grows from teaching- requires experience and time.
2. Moral virtue- comes about from habit
* Moral virtue (good and bad) is not by nature.
* We are adapted by nature to receive virtues but they are made perfect by habit.
* Moral excellence is concerned with pleasure and pain

Three conditions for virtuous actions:

1. Knowledge of being virtuous
2. Choice (i.e., not under force, with knowledge of circumstances, after deliberation)
3. Must proceed from character

What kind of thing is virtue?

The soul is made up of three kinds of things:

1. Passion: virtue is not a passion. We are not praised or blamed for our passions (i.e. how we feel). By passions we are moved, but virtue is a disposition.
2. Faculty: We are not praised or blamed because of our capacities or potential.
3. State of character: \*\*\*Virtue is said to be a state of character or disposition.

How do we live virtuously? “Doctrine of the mean”- Virtue is aiming at the intermediate.

To be virtuous is to feel (pleasure and pain): 1.) at the right times, 2.) toward the right people, 3.) with the right motive (intention)

26- Possible to fail in many ways, possible to succeed in one way.

Intermediate is an extreme- No excess and deficiency of a mean.

30- We must incline sometimes toward the excess, sometimes toward the deficiency to hit the mean. (Table of virtues)

Book 10: What is the nature of Happiness? Not a state; does not lack (self-sufficient)

*Life of pleasure?*

Amusement: would be strange to suffer whole life for amusement

Relaxation: not an end, but a means (to accomplishing other things, etc.).

*Life of Utility?* Political activity: not leisurely.

*Contemplative life?* Most self-sufficient

31- If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest virtue – that which is best in us. Reason- divine