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1. THE GOAL OF LIFE

(Book 1)

Aristotle opens his treatise by remarking that goal-directed activity is pervasive in human life. He extrapolates to the notion of a single goal or purpose for all of human life, which he calls “the good” or “the human good.”

HUMAN PURSUITS

[1.1] Every art and every discipline, and likewise every action and every choice, seems to aim at some good. That is why people have rightly proposed *the good* to be what everything aims at. . . .

Since there are many different actions, arts, and sciences, there are also many goals. For example, health is the goal of medicine, a ship

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δὲ νίκη, οικονομικῆς δὲ πλοῦτος. ὅσαι δ' εἰσὶ τῶν τοιούτων ὑπὸ μίαν τινὰ δύναμιν, καθάπερ ὑπὸ τὴν ἵππικὴν χαλινοποικὴ καὶ ὅσαι ἄλλαι τῶν ἵππικῶν ὀργάνων εἰσὶν, αὕτη δὲ καὶ πᾶσα πολεμικὴ πρᾶξις ὑπὸ τὴν στρατηγικὴν, κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ τρόπον ἄλλαι ὑφ' ἑτέρας· ἐν ἀπάσαις δὲ τὰ τῶν ἀρχιτεκτονικῶν τέλη πάντων ἐστὶν αἰρετώτερα τῶν ὑπ' αὐτά· τούτων γὰρ χάριν κάκεῖνα διώκεται. . . .

[1.2] Εἰ δὴ τι τέλος ἐστὶ τῶν πρακτῶν ὃ δι' αὐτὸ βουλόμεθα, τᾶλλα δὲ διὰ τοῦτο, καὶ μὴ πάντα δι' ἕτερον αἰρούμεθα (πρόεισι γὰρ οὕτω γ' εἰς ἄπειρον, ὥστ' εἶναι κενὴν καὶ ματαίαν τὴν ὄρεξιν), δῆλον ὡς τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη τάγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἄριστον. ἄρ' οὖν καὶ πρὸς τὸν βίον ἢ γνῶσις αὐτοῦ μεγάλην

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is the goal of shipbuilding, victory is the goal of the general's art, and wealth is the goal of household economy. Where such practices fall under a single enterprise, in the way bridle making and the manufacture of other equipment for riding fall under horsemanship, and horsemanship itself and other practices of war fall under the general's art, and other practices in the same way fall under others—in all these cases the goals of the higher-up practices are more choiceworthy than those that fall under them, since the lower ones are pursued for their sake. . . .

[I.2] Now, if our actions have a goal that we wish for because of itself and we wish for everything else because of it (rather than always choosing because of some further thing, an infinite regress that would make desire empty and futile), clearly this goal would be *the good* and the best. Knowing it would surely have great impact on our lives, since we would be like

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ἔχει ῥοπὴν, καὶ καθάπερ τοξόται σκοπὸν ἔχοντες
μᾶλλον ἂν τυγχάνοιμεν τοῦ δέοντος;

εἰ δ' οὕτω, πειρατέον τύπῳ γε περιλαβεῖν αὐτὸ
τί ποτ' ἐστὶ καὶ τίνας τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἢ δυνάμεων.
δόξειε δ' ἂν τῆς κυριωτάτης καὶ μάλιστα ἀρχιτε-
κτονικῆς. τοιαύτη δ' ἡ πολιτικὴ φαίνεται· τίνας
γὰρ εἶναι χρεῶν τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι,
καὶ ποίας ἐκάστους μαθάνειν καὶ μέχρι τίνας,
αὕτη διατάσσει· ὀρῶμεν δὲ καὶ τὰς ἐντιμοτάτας
τῶν δυνάμεων ὑπὸ ταύτην οὔσας, οἷον στρατηγι-
κὴν οἰκονομικὴν ῥητορικὴν· χρωμένης δὲ ταύτης
ταῖς λοιπαῖς [πρακτικαῖς] τῶν ἐπιστημῶν, ἔτι δὲ
νομοθετούσης τί δεῖ πράττειν καὶ τίνων ἀπέχε-
σθαι, τὸ ταύτης τέλος περιέχει ἂν τὰ τῶν ἄλλων,
ὥστε τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη τὰνθρώπινον ἀγαθόν. εἰ γὰρ
καὶ ταυτόν ἐστὶν ἐνὶ καὶ πόλει, μείζον γε καὶ τε-
λειότερον τὸ τῆς πόλεως φαίνεται καὶ λαβεῖν καὶ
σώζειν· ἀγαπητὸν μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἐνὶ μόνῳ, κάλλιον
δὲ καὶ θειότερον ἔθνει καὶ πόλεσιν.

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archers with a target and more likely to hit the mark.

If all this is so, we should try to grasp at least in outline what this goal is, and what discipline or capacity it belongs to. It would seem to belong to the most commanding and highest. The art of politics clearly has this status, since it determines which disciplines are needed in cities, who shall learn which ones, and how far. We see that the most honored capacities are subordinate to it: the arts of the general, of household economy, and of public speaking. Since politics employs all other disciplines and legislates what must be done and what not done, its goal would encompass the goals of the others and thus would be *the human good*. Even if it is the same for an individual and for a city, securing and preserving it for a city is a greater and more perfect achievement. While desirable for a single person, it is more splendid and godly for a nation and for cities.

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ἡ μὲν οὖν μέθοδος τούτων ἐφίεται, πολιτική
τις οὕσα.

[I.4] Λέγωμεν δ' ἀναλαβόντες, ἐπειδὴ πᾶσα γνῶ-
σις καὶ προαίρεσις ἀγαθοῦ τινὸς ὀρέγεται, τί
ἐστὶν οὗ λέγομεν τὴν πολιτικὴν ἐφίεσθαι καὶ τί τὸ
πάντων ἀκρότατον τῶν πρακτῶν ἀγαθῶν.
ὄνόματι μὲν οὖν σχεδὸν ὑπὸ τῶν πλείστων ὁμο-
λογεῖται· τὴν γὰρ εὐδαιμονίαν καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ
οἱ χαρίεντες λέγουσιν, τὸ δ' εὖ ζῆν καὶ τὸ εὖ πράτ-
τειν ταῦτόν ὑπολαμβάνουσι τῷ εὐδαιμονεῖν· περὶ
δὲ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας, τί ἐστίν, ἀμφισβητοῦσι καὶ
οὐχ ὁμοίως οἱ πολλοὶ τοῖς σοφοῖς ἀποδιδόασιν.
οἱ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἐναργῶν τι καὶ φανερῶν, οἷον

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These are the aims of our present inquiry, which belongs to the art of politics.

In chapter 3, Aristotle cautions his audience not to expect mathematical precision in this inquiry and warns that the topic is not suitable for the young.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

[I.4] Let us resume our inquiry and ask: if every kind of knowledge and every deliberate course of action aims at some good, what good does the art of politics aim at? What is the highest good that we aim at in our actions? Well, there is general agreement on what to call it, since both ordinary people and sophisticated people say it is happiness, and they take living well and doing well to be the same as being happy. But most people disagree with learned people on how to specify what happiness is. To some it is a clear

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ἡδονὴν ἢ πλοῦτον ἢ τιμὴν, ἄλλοι δ' ἄλλο—
πολλάκις δὲ καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ἕτερον· νοσήσας μὲν
γὰρ ὑγίειαν, πενόμενος δὲ πλοῦτον· συνειδότες
δ' ἑαυτοῖς ἄγνοιαν τοὺς μέγα τι καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτοὺς
λέγοντας θαυμάζουσιν. ἔνιοι δ' ὥοντο παρὰ τὰ
πολλὰ ταῦτα ἀγαθὰ ἄλλο τι καθ' αὐτὸ εἶναι, ὃ καὶ
τούτοις πᾶσιν αἰτιὸν ἐστι τοῦ εἶναι ἀγαθὰ. . . .

[1.7] Πάλιν δ' ἐπανέλθωμεν ἐπὶ τὸ ζητούμενον
ἀγαθόν, τί ποτ' ἂν εἴη. φαίνεται μὲν γὰρ ἄλλο ἐν
ἄλλῃ πράξει καὶ τέχνῃ· ἄλλο γὰρ ἐν ἰατρικῇ καὶ
στρατηγικῇ καὶ ταῖς λοιπαῖς ὁμοίως. τί οὖν ἐκά-
στης τἀγαθόν; ἢ οὐ χάριν τὰ λοιπὰ πράττεται;
τοῦτο δ' ἐν ἰατρικῇ μὲν ὑγίεια, ἐν στρατηγικῇ δὲ

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and obvious thing like pleasure or wealth or honor. To others it is something else, in many cases a different thing on different occasions: health when they are ill, wealth when they are poor; when aware of their own ignorance, they are impressed by people who say it is something grand and beyond their grasp. Some have taken it to be other than and beyond this multitude of good things, something good in itself and the cause of those other things being good. . . .

For the rest of chapter 4, and in chapters 5 and 6, Aristotle discusses some of these alternative views, the last of which belongs to Plato.

[1.7] Turning back now to the good under investigation, what might it be? Clearly, it is different things in different practices and disciplines: one thing in the art of medicine, another thing in the art of the general, and similarly in all the rest. In any particular case, what is the good? Isn't it the point of the whole enterprise? That is, health in the case of medicine, victory

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νίκη, ἐν οἰκοδομικῇ δ' οἰκία, ἐν ἄλλῳ δ' ἄλλο, ἐν ἀπάσῃ δὲ πράξει καὶ προαιρέσει τὸ τέλος· τούτου γὰρ ἔνεκα τὰ λοιπὰ πράττουσι πάντες. ὥστ' εἴ τι τῶν πρακτῶν ἀπάντων ἐστὶ τέλος, τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη τὸ πρακτὸν ἀγαθόν, εἰ δὲ πλείω, ταῦτα.

μεταβαίνων δὴ ὁ λόγος εἰς ταῦτὸν ἀφίκται· τοῦτο δ' ἔτι μᾶλλον διασαφῆσαι πειρατέον.

ἐπεὶ δὲ πλείω φαίνεται τὰ τέλη, τούτων δ' αἰρούμεθά τινα δι' ἕτερον, οἷον πλοῦτον αὐλοῦς καὶ ὄλως τὰ ὄργανα, δῆλον ὡς οὐκ ἔστι πάντα τέλεια· τὸ δ' ἄριστον τέλειόν τι φαίνεται. ὥστ' εἰ μὲν ἐστὶν ἓν τι μόνον τέλειον, τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη τὸ

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in the case of the general's art, a house in the case of the builder's art—different things in different contexts—but in any particular practice or project it is *the goal*, since everyone does everything else for its sake. So, if something is the goal of all our practice, it would be the *practical good*; and if there are several such goals, they would be the good.

We have now arrived at the same conclusion as before, but by a different route. Still, we should try to add more clarity.

Aristotle's next move is to introduce the notion of a "final" goal. The adjective he uses (TELEION) is translated "complete" or "perfect" in other contexts.

There are some things we choose because of something else, for example wealth, flutes, and instruments in general. So, although there are many goals, not all of them are final. Now, the best is evidently something final. So, if only one goal is final, it will be the good we seek, and if

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ζητούμενον, εἰ δὲ πλείω, τὸ τελειότατον τούτων. τελειότερον δὲ λέγομεν τὸ καθ' αὐτὸ διωκτὸν τοῦ δι' ἕτερον καὶ τὸ μηδέποτε δι' ἄλλο αἰρετὸν τῶν <καὶ> καθ' αὐτὰ καὶ δι' αὐτὸ αἰρετῶν, καὶ ἀπλῶς δὴ τέλειον τὸ καθ' αὐτὸ αἰρετὸν ἀεὶ καὶ μηδέποτε δι' ἄλλο.

τοιούτον δ' ἡ εὐδαιμονία μάλιστα εἶναι δοκεῖ ταύτην γὰρ αἰρούμεθα ἀεὶ δι' αὐτὴν καὶ οὐδέποτε δι' ἄλλο, τιμὴν δὲ καὶ ἡδονὴν καὶ νοῦν καὶ πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν αἰρούμεθα μὲν καὶ δι' αὐτὰ (μηθενὸς γὰρ ἀποβαίνοντος ἐλοίμεθ' ἂν ἕκαστον αὐτῶν), αἰρούμεθα δὲ καὶ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας χάριν, διὰ τούτων ὑπολαμβάνοντες εὐδαιμονήσειν. τὴν δ' εὐδαιμονίαν οὐδεὶς αἰρεῖται τούτων χάριν, οὐδ' ὅλως δι' ἄλλο. . . .

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several are final, the most final of them will be the good. In our view, a goal pursued for itself is more final than a goal pursued because of another thing, and what is never chosen because of something else is more final than the things chosen for themselves *and* because of it. We call *perfectly final* what is always chosen for itself and never because of another thing.

Happiness, it seems, is precisely this sort of thing. We choose it always because of itself, and never because of another thing. As for honor, pleasure, wisdom, and any virtue: we choose them both because of themselves (since we would take each of them even if nothing further came of it), but also for the sake of happiness, thinking that through them we will be happy. By contrast, no one chooses happiness for the sake of these things—or, for that matter, because of anything else. . . .

Aristotle gives further reasons for supposing that happiness is the human good, then argues for his

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Ἄλλ' ἴσως τὴν μὲν εὐδαιμονίαν τὸ ἄριστον λέγειν ὁμολογούμενόν τι φαίνεται, ποθεῖται δ' ἐναργέστερον τί ἐστὶν ἔτι λεχθῆναι. τάχα δὴ γένοιτ' ἂν τοῦτ', εἰ ληφθεῖ τὸ ἔργον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. ὥσπερ γὰρ αὐλητῆ καὶ ἀγαλματοποιῶ καὶ παντὶ τεχνίτη, καὶ ὅλως ὧν ἔστιν ἔργον τι καὶ πρᾶξις, ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ

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own conception of happiness in an argument that is sometimes called the “function” argument.

THE HUMAN FUNCTION

To find out what happiness is, Aristotle asks a famous question—what does a human being DO?—meaning, what sort of activity is characteristically human.⁴ This question makes sense in light of the assumption in chapter 4 that happiness is the same as “doing well.” If Aristotle can now identify what it is that humans DO, he can conclude that DOING IT WELL is what human happiness consists in.

[1.7, *continued*] While there is evidently general agreement that happiness is the best thing, we still need to state more clearly what it is. Presumably we might do this if we could grasp what a human being *does*. Consider a flute player, a sculptor, any artisan—in general, anything with a characteristic activity that it performs. Being good or doing well for such a

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δοκεῖ τάγαθὸν εἶναι καὶ τὸ εὖ, οὕτω δόξειεν ἂν καὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, εἴπερ ἔστι τι ἔργον αὐτοῦ. πότερον οὖν τέκτονος μὲν καὶ σκυτέως ἔστιν ἔργα τινὰ καὶ πράξεις, ἀνθρώπου δ' οὐδέν ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἄργὸν πέφυκεν; ἢ καθάπερ ὀφθαλμοῦ καὶ χειρὸς καὶ ποδὸς καὶ ὄλως ἐκάστου τῶν μορίων φαίνεται τι ἔργον, οὕτω καὶ ἀνθρώπου παρὰ πάντα ταῦτα θεῖη τις ἂν ἔργον τι; τί οὖν δὴ τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη ποτέ;

τὸ μὲν γὰρ ζῆν κοινὸν εἶναι φαίνεται καὶ τοῖς φυτοῖς, ζητεῖται δὲ τὸ ἴδιον. ἀφοριστέον ἄρα τὴν τε θρεπτικὴν καὶ τὴν αὐξητικὴν ζωὴν. ἐπομένη δὲ αἰσθητικὴ τις ἂν εἴη, φαίνεται δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ κοινὴ καὶ ἵππῳ καὶ βοῖ καὶ παντὶ ζῳῳ. λείπεται δὲ πρᾶκτικὴ τις τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος· τούτου δὲ τὸ μὲν ὡς ἐπιπειθὲς λόγῳ, τὸ δ' ὡς ἔχον καὶ διανοούμενον. . . .

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thing will involve that activity, and the same will be true for a human being, if there is in fact a kind of activity characteristic of humans. Well, do a carpenter and a shoemaker each have a characteristic activity that they perform, but a human being has none? Are we naturally inactive? Or rather, since there is clearly an activity characteristic of the eye, and of the hand, and of the foot—and likewise for each of our parts—might we not likewise posit a kind of activity that belongs to us as humans, above and beyond all that? Well, what might that be?

Clearly, being alive is something we have in common with plants, but we are looking for something distinctively human, so we should set aside the life of nourishment and growth. Next would be the life of perception, but this too appears common to horse and ox and every animal. What's left is a life that employs our thinking part—one part of which is responsive to thought, while another part *has* thought and does the thinking. . . .

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εἰ δ' ἐστὶν ἔργον ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια κατὰ λόγον ἢ μὴ ἄνευ λόγου, τὸ δ' αὐτὸ φαμεν ἔργον εἶναι τῷ γένει τοῦδε καὶ τοῦδε σπουδαίου, ὡσπερ κιθαριστοῦ καὶ σπουδαίου κιθαριστοῦ, καὶ ἀπλῶς δὴ τοῦτ' ἐπὶ πάντων, προστιθεμένης τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν ὑπεροχῆς πρὸς τὸ ἔργον· κιθαριστοῦ μὲν γὰρ κιθαρίζειν, σπουδαίου δὲ τὸ εὖ·

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Aristotle's next move depends on the assumption that the kinds of life he has just enumerated are activities of the SOUL. Soul, for him, is a biological and psychological principle; in plants it is the power of nutrition and growth; in animals it also includes the power of perception and locomotion; in human animals, it includes the additional power of thought. Human activity, for him, will be activity of the distinctively human part of the soul.

So, let us suppose that characteristically human activity is activity of the soul: thinking activity, or activity connected to thinking. Now, what a thing characteristically does and what a good thing of its kind does are the same type of activity. For example, a kitharist and a good kitharist perform the same type of activity.⁵ In all cases, the superior performance that comes from being good is *additional* to the activity. For example, a kitharist *plays the kithara*, while a good kitharist *plays the kithara well*.

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εἰ δ' οὕτως, [ἀνθρώπου δὲ τίθεμεν ἔργον ζώην
τινα, ταύτην δὲ ψυχῆς ἐνέργειαν καὶ πράξεις μετὰ
λόγου, σπουδαίου δ' ἀνδρὸς εὖ ταῦτα καὶ καλῶς,
ἕκαστον δ' εὖ κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ἀρετὴν ἀποτε-
λεῖται· εἰ δ' οὕτω,] τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθὸν ψυχῆς
ἐνέργεια γίνεται κατ' ἀρετὴν, εἰ δὲ πλείους αἱ ἀρε-
ταί, κατὰ τὴν ἀρίστην καὶ τελειοτάτην.

ἔτι δ' ἐν βίῳ τελείω. μία γὰρ χελιδὼν ἔαρ οὐ
ποιεῖ, οὐδὲ μία ἡμέρα· οὕτω δὲ οὐδὲ μακάριον καὶ
εὐδαίμονα μία ἡμέρα οὐδ' ὀλίγος χρόνος.

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When Aristotle speaks above of “being good” he uses a single word, ARETĒ, which will be translated “virtue” from now on. Although in English “virtue” is typically used for moral goodness, ARETĒ is a much wider notion for Aristotle and can refer to the goodness of anything.

If all this is so—if we posit that it is characteristically human to live a particular kind of life, a life in which the soul is engaged in activities involving thought; that it is characteristic of a good person to do that well and finely; and that each thing is perfected by its own proper virtue—in that case, the human good turns out to be activity of the soul that comes from virtue. If there is more than one human virtue, the good will be activity that comes from the best and most complete virtue.

In addition, it must be in a complete life. One swallow doesn’t make it spring, and a single day doesn’t either, and similarly a single day won’t make a person blessed and happy, and a short time won’t either.

Περιγεγράφθω μὲν οὖν τὰγαθὸν ταύτη· . . .

[I.9] . . . εἰκότως οὖν οὔτε βοῦν οὔτε ἵππον οὔτε ἄλλο τῶν ζώων οὐδὲν εὐδαιμον λέγομεν· οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν οἶόν τε κοινωνῆσαι τοιαύτης ἐνεργείας. διὰ ταύτην δὲ τὴν αἰτίαν οὐδὲ παῖς εὐδαίμων ἐστίν· οὐπω γὰρ πρακτικὸς τῶν τοιούτων διὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν· οἱ δὲ λεγόμενοι διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα μακαρίζονται. δεῖ γάρ, ὥσπερ εἶπομεν, καὶ ἀρετῆς τελείας καὶ βίου τελείου. πολλαὶ γὰρ μεταβολαὶ γίνονται καὶ παντοῖαι τύχαι κατὰ τὸν βίον, καὶ ἐνδέχεται τὸν μάλιστ' εὐθηνοῦντα μεγάλας συμφοραῖς περιπεσεῖν ἐπὶ γήρως, καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς Τρωι-

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Let this be our outline of *the good*. . . .

Over chapters 8–10, Aristotle shows that his outline of the human good aligns well with what many people believe about happiness, and he considers what role good fortune plays in a happy life.

A FULL HUMAN LIFE

[I.9] . . . It makes sense that we don't attribute happiness to an ox or a horse, or any other animal, since they are incapable of engaging in the kind of actions that good people perform. For the same reason, children are not happy either, since they are not yet capable of performing those actions, because of their age. If we call them happy, it is on the expectation that they will be. After all, as we said, happiness requires both complete virtue and a complete life. There are many upheavals in life and all sorts of luck, and it is possible for someone living a thriving

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κοῖς περὶ Πριάμου μυθεύεται· τὸν δὲ τοιαύταις
χρησάμενον τύχαις καὶ τελευτήσαντα ἀθλίως
οὐδεὶς εὐδαιμονίζει.

[1.10] Πότερον οὖν οὐδ' ἄλλον οὐδένα ἀνθρώ-
πων εὐδαιμονιστέον ἕως ἂν ζῆ, κατὰ Σόλωνα δὲ
χρεῶν τέλος ὄραῖν; εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ θετέον οὕτως, ἄρα
γε καὶ ἔστιν εὐδαίμων τότε ἐπειδὴν ἀποθάνῃ; ἢ
τοῦτό γε παντελῶς ἄτοπον, ἄλλως τε καὶ τοῖς λέ-
γουσιν ἡμῖν ἐνέργειάν τινα τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν; εἰ δὲ
μὴ λέγομεν τὸν τεθνεῶτα εὐδαίμονα, μηδὲ Σόλων
τοῦτο βούλεται, ἀλλ' ὅτι τῆνικαῦτα ἂν τις
ἀσφαλῶς μακαρίσειεν ἄνθρωπον ὡς ἐκτὸς ἤδη
τῶν κακῶν ὄντα καὶ τῶν δυστυχημάτων, ἔχει μὲν
καὶ τοῦτ' ἀμφισβήτησίν τινα· . . .

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life to suffer terrible misfortunes in old age, like Priam in the stories about Troy. No one would call you happy if you experienced such misfortune and died so wretchedly.⁶

[1.10] Does that mean Solon⁷ was right to say we must look to the end, and call no person happy while they are alive? If so, does that mean people are happy when they are dead? That would be strange, especially for those who say happiness is an activity! And if we don't call a dead person happy, and that is not what Solon meant—if his point is that only then can we safely declare a person happy, because they are outside the reach of evils and misfortunes—even that is open to dispute. . . .

After addressing these and other puzzles about happiness, Aristotle returns to his “outline” of happiness and clarifies the kind of virtue it involves.

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[1.13] Ἐπεὶ δ' ἐστὶν ἡ εὐδαιμονία ψυχῆς ἐνέργειά τις κατ' ἀρετὴν τελείαν, περὶ ἀρετῆς ἐπισκεπτέον ἂν εἴη· τάχα γὰρ οὕτως ἂν βέλτιον καὶ περὶ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας θεωρήσαιμεν . . . περὶ ἀρετῆς δὲ ἐπισκεπτέον ἀνθρωπίνης δῆλον ὅτι· καὶ γὰρ τάγαθὸν ἀνθρώπινον ἐζητοῦμεν καὶ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ἀνθρωπίνην. ἀρετὴν δὲ λέγομεν ἀνθρωπίνην οὐ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀλλὰ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς· καὶ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν δὲ ψυχῆς ἐνέργειαν λέγομεν. . . .

τὸ μὲν ἄλογον αὐτῆς εἶναι, τὸ δὲ λόγον ἔχον. . . . τοῦ ἀλόγου δὲ τὸ μὲν ἔοικε κοινῶ καὶ φυτικῶ, λέγω δὲ τὸ αἴτιον τοῦ τρέφεσθαι καὶ αὔξεσθαι· . . . ταύτης μὲν οὖν κοινὴ τις ἀρετὴ καὶ οὐκ

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HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN VIRTUE

[1.13] Since happiness is an activity of the soul that comes from complete virtue, we should investigate virtue. That way we might improve our thinking about happiness. . . . And it is clearly *human* virtue that we must investigate, since it is the human good and human happiness that we have been investigating. In our view, *human* virtue is not of the body but of the soul. Happiness, we say, is an activity of the soul. . . .

Thus we need knowledge of the soul, Aristotle notes, but not specialized expertise. We can get by, he says, with the account of the soul in his (now lost) popular writings, which he summarizes as follows.

Our soul has an unthinking part and a thinking part. . . . We share one aspect of the unthinking part with plants; it is the cause of nourishment and growth. . . . The virtue of this power is

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ἀνθρωπίνη φαίνεται· δοκεῖ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ὕπνοις ἐνεργεῖν μάλιστα τὸ μόνιον τοῦτο καὶ ἡ δύναμις αὕτη, ὁ δ' ἀγαθὸς καὶ κακὸς ἤκιστα διάδηλοι καθ' ὕπνον . . .

ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τούτων ἄλις, καὶ τὸ θραπετικὸν ἐατέον, ἐπειδὴ τῆς ἀνθρωπικῆς ἀρετῆς ἄμοιρον πέφυκεν. ἔοικε δὲ καὶ ἄλλη τις φύσις τῆς ψυχῆς ἄλογος εἶναι, μετέχουσα μέντοι πῆ λόγου. τοῦ γὰρ ἐγκρατοῦς καὶ ἀκρατοῦς τὸν λόγον καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ λόγον ἔχον ἐπαινοῦμεν· ὀρθῶς γὰρ καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ βέλτιστα παρακαλεῖ· φαίνεται δ' ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἄλλο τι παρὰ τὸν λόγον πεφυκός, ὃ μάχεται καὶ ἀντιτείνει τῷ λόγῳ. ἀτεχνῶς γὰρ καθάπερ τὰ παραλελυμένα τοῦ σώματος μόρια εἰς τὰ δεξιὰ προαιρουμένων κινῆσαι τὸναντίον εἰς τὰ ἀριστερὰ παραφέρεται, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς οὕτως· ἐπὶ τάναντία γὰρ αἱ ὀρμαὶ τῶν ἀκρατῶν. ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς σώμασι μὲν ὀρῶμεν τὸ παραφερόμενον, ἐπὶ

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clearly common rather than human. Indeed, this part and power is at work primarily during sleep, when the difference between good and bad people is least discernible. . . .

But enough about the nutritive soul; let us set it aside, since by its nature it has no part in human virtue. Now, a different part of our soul's nature is also unthinking but nonetheless shares in thought in a way. Consider, for example, someone exercising self-control, or losing control. We praise their thinking—that is, the thinking part of their soul—because it correctly urges them toward the best course of action. But their nature clearly also contains something else alongside thinking that fights and pulls against it. What happens in their soul is very much like what happens in a body when a paralyzed limb moves in the wrong direction (for example, the limb moves left when you try to move it to the right). That is, people who lose control are pulled in two directions, even though we don't actually see the soul part moving in the wrong

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δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς οὐχ ὀρῶμεν. ἴσως δ' οὐδὲν ἦττον
καὶ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ νομιστέον εἶναί τι παρὰ τὸν λόγον,
ἐναντιούμενον τούτῳ καὶ ἀντιβαῖνον. πῶς δ'
ἕτερον, οὐδὲν διαφέρει.

λόγου δὲ καὶ τοῦτο φαίνεται μετέχειν, ὥσπερ
εἵπομεν· πειθαρχεῖ γοῦν τῷ λόγῳ — τὸ τοῦ ἐγκρα-
τοῦς ἔτι δ' ἴσως εὐηκοώτερόν ἐστι τὸ τοῦ σώ-
φρονος καὶ ἀνδρείου· πάντα γὰρ ὁμοφωνεῖ τῷ
λόγῳ. φαίνεται δὴ καὶ τὸ ἄλογον διπτόν. τὸ μὲν
γὰρ φυτικὸν οὐδαμῶς κοινωνεῖ λόγου, τὸ δ' ἐπι-
θυμητικὸν καὶ ὄλως ὀρεκτικὸν μετέχει πως, ἧ κατ-
ήκοόν ἐστιν αὐτοῦ καὶ πειθαρχικόν· οὕτω δὴ
καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τῶν φίλων φαμὲν ἔχειν λόγον,
καὶ οὐχ ὥσπερ τῶν μαθηματικῶν. ὅτι δὲ πείθεται
πως ὑπὸ λόγου τὸ ἄλογον, μηνύει καὶ ἡ νουθέτη-
σις καὶ πᾶσα ἐπιτίμησις τε καὶ παράκλησις. εἰ δὲ

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