

Aristotle an undying legacy philosophy essay

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ARISTOTLEAn Undying Legacy: Among the three of the trio of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the last extended the term ' philosopher' to include every kind of inquirer - scientific, ethical, logical, biological, and many more. This was his unique contribution to the legacy he inherited from his great predecessors. Aristotle gave philosophy a concrete garb, a dedication to finding facts related to our worldly life, rather than to vague other-worldly truths, difficult to grasp. He was never far from the ' madding crowd', so to say. The temporal world, the here and now, life as we know it, in all its forms, its substance, its contradictions, absorbed him. He examined specific worldly matters to arrive at universal truths. By acknowledging the importance of worldly phenomena, he broadened the horizons of philosophy. He followed his illustrious teacher Plato, yet diverged in important ways from Plato. His works include treatises on diverse subjects such as animal parts, poetry, physics, logic, ethics and rhetoric, to name just a few. Indeed, this multifarious, multifaceted, erudite, ethical mammoth of a thinker founded not one but two subjects of study - logic and biology. Jonathan Barnes, author and Oxford professor, condenses the praise aptly, "...No man before him had contributed so much to learning. No man after could hope to rival his achievements." Initial Pace: Was the spark of genius visible in early childhood? Did Aristotle the boy display signs of brilliance? Aristotle must have displayed some of these, otherwise he would not have been sent to the prestigious Academy of Plato. Information about the ancient Greeks is limited and diverse. But we do know that Aristotle was born in 384BC in Stageira, and not in Athens like his worthy teacher. Stageira is about 34 miles east of modern-day Thessalonica. His father Nicomachus was the personal physician to King Amyntas of Macedon, a very prestigious and powerful position. In <https://assignbuster.com/aristotle-an-undying-legacy-philosophy-essay/>

Ancient Greece the medical profession was pursued on the basis of birth and not that of qualification. All physicians were thought to be descendants of the legendary or mythical Asclepius (the Greek god of healing). Hence, physicians were thought to have divine powers. Certainly, Aristotle must have wanted to continue in this exalted profession. However, his father died when he was ten and his mother Phaestis, who was from a wealthy family in Chalcis on the isle of Euboea, also died soon after. Proxenus of Atarneus, who was married to Aristotle's older sister, Arimneste, became Aristotle's guardian until he came of age. When Aristotle turned 17, Proxenus sent him to Athens to pursue higher education in Athens at the highly celebrated Academy, the school set up by the great philosopher Plato. Even though Plato went willingly enough, he was never cut-off from his childhood friends in Macedon, especially those in the palace of the King of Macedon. Seminal Influences: Aristotle's aristocratic upbringing did initially spoil him. As J. Barnes puts it, " He was a bit of a dandy, wearing rings on his fingers and cutting his hair fashionably short...His enemies, who were numerous, made him out to be arrogant and overbearing...he was properly proud of his own attainments. As a man he was...admirable rather than amiable." He stands in sharp contrast sometimes to his predecessors, the brilliant, unassuming Socrates, and the amiable, modest Plato. Some scholars say that he spent his father's wealth lavishly on parties and friends. In fact, his later thoughts do reflect this early aristocratic notion. In The Politics, he claims that slaves have no liberty. " Someone, who, being a man, belongs by nature not to himself but to someone else, is a slave by nature - is a slave or article of property." This is not to be thought of as hardness of heart or cruelty. In ancient Greece and Rome and even later, it was the norm to have slaves for <https://assignbuster.com/aristotle-an-undying-legacy-philosophy-essay/>

all manual work. The Greeks were in fact notorious for being dependent on their slaves for the smallest matters. However, as he matured, the rough edges in his nature, if any, seemed to have smoothed. His will shows that he was a considerate father and a caring partner, leaving his fortunes to his kith and kin. More importantly, his early exposure to the medical discipline embedded deep within him an analytical and inquiring attitude. This is what roused his curiosity and he was able to study living beings so deeply. The Need to Know: The need to go to the depth of anything and everything was his overarching ambition. He could not rest until he felt that he had plumbed the depths of any phenomenon, any creature, and any idea. His constant refrain was, " All men by nature desire knowledge." His desire to know was so acute that nothing escaped his close scrutiny. His passion to know the truth was so overwhelming that he even questioned his renowned teacher, Plato and his doctrines. " Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth." So he set out with this intense need to know which drove him to the heights of glory. At the Academy: The close proximity of Plato and Aristotle, two such intellectually dazzling personalities, has generated wonder in numerous people. It is known that after a few years of education, Aristotle also began to lecture at the Academy, mainly on rhetoric. Aristotle studied at the Academy for nearly twenty years - 367BC to 347BC. Plato's undeniable intellectual and moral superiority left a deep impact on his extraordinary student. However, Aristotle's writing lacks the charm and lucidity of that of Plato, whose style of writing moves the reader even to this day. Aristotle agreed with a good deal of his teacher's doctrines. He met many learned persons at the Academy, including Xenocrates and Theophrastus who became his lifelong friends. Aristotle also later delivered lectures at the <https://assignbuster.com/aristotle-an-undying-legacy-philosophy-essay/>

Academy. Gradually, however, he realized that there were several questions to which there were no answers to be found. His restlessness became visible when he questioned the validity of the Theory of Forms, which was too abstract for him, and other basic tenets of Plato. He felt that Plato's theories were unworldly, and lacked proof. He was interested in earthly happenings and not in the abstract world, of which Plato often spoke. Later, he came out with his own explanations, which elucidated reality in very different terms. Aristotle did not write much during his stay at the Academy, and left around 347BC during Plato's last days. After Plato, the Academy was taken over by Speusippus, a relation of Plato. Some historians have speculated that Aristotle was disappointed at not being made head of the Academy, but this is doubtful as he could not have expected such a thing, being an alien. Athenian law did not permit non-Athenians to hold positions of authority in Athens. Family Life: Aristotle's friend Hermias, king of Atarneus and Assos in Mysia, Greece, invited Aristotle to court. During his three-year stay in Mysia, Aristotle met and married his first wife, Pythias, Hermias' niece. Together, the couple had a daughter, Pythias, named after her mother. Aristotle travelled from Athens to Assos which faces the island of Lesbos. Xenocrates, his friend at the Academy, left with him. In Assos Aristotle was received by the ruler Hermias of Atarneus with much acclaim. It is likely that Aristotle was acting as an ambassador for King Philip of Macedon, his native place, and he certainly was treated as such by Hermias, who had an extremely bad reputation as a tyrant, barbarian and eunuch! But he must have obviously been friendly to Aristotle, not least because of the latter's closeness to the royal family of Macedonia. However, Aristotle's wife died about 10 years after their marriage. It is thought that she was much younger than Aristotle, <https://assignbuster.com/aristotle-an-undying-legacy-philosophy-essay/>

being probably about 18 when they married. Aristotle did not marry again after the death of his wife but he did form a relationship with Herpyllis, who came from his home town of Stagirus. It is not clear when they first met but together they had a son, Nicomachus, named after Aristotle's father.

Aristotle's well-known treatise *Nicomachean Ethics* was named after his son. Turning Point: On Assos, Aristotle became the leader of the group of philosophers which Hermias had gathered there. It is possible that Aristotle's friend Xenocrates was also a member of the group for a time. Aristotle had a strong interest in anatomy and the structure of living things in general, an interest which his father had fostered in him in his early years; this interest helped him to develop a remarkable talent for observation. It can very well be argued that his diagnostic bent of mind, developed in childhood, perhaps led him into the field of natural sciences, something that his teacher, Plato, had avoided. That is also perhaps the reason that he could not rest content with an abstract Theory of Forms, which wished away the temporal world for a 'higher' reality. He told his disciples, '...we should not childishly complain against the enquiry into the less worthy animals; for in everything natural there is something marvellous. Heraclitus (ancient Greek philosopher) is reported to have said to some visitors, 'come in, be bold, there are gods here too'. In the same way we should approach the study of every animal without shame.' This can easily be considered an important tenet in his doctrine and indicates his faith in the present earthly condition, rather than in some hazily understood higher reality. Aristotle and the members of his group began to collect samples for study while in Assos, particularly in zoology and biology. This was truly the defining period of Aristotle's life because unknown to himself, he had begun to find a new subject of study – <https://assignbuster.com/aristotle-an-undying-legacy-philosophy-essay/>

biology. He seemed to have fulfilled his destiny, validating the meaning of his name 'Aristotle' or 'the best purpose'. His childhood training from his father, his overriding curiosity, his analytical bent of mind, all stood him in good stead as he began his remarkable collection of different specimens of flora and fauna from different parts of the land. He dissected most of the specimens brought by his assistants, but he never dissected the human body. Hence, his conjectures about the human anatomy were not accepted after a certain time. All the same, he collected all kinds of specimens, manuscripts and material; so enormous was his collection of manuscripts that his house was called the House of the Reader. How Biology Came Into Being: However, Aristotle's time in Assos was ended by political events. The Persians attacked the town and Hermias was captured and executed in 345BC. Aristotle escaped and stopped on the island of Lesbos on his way to Macedonia. It was more than a passing visit for he remained there for about a year and must have had the group of scientists from Assos with him for they continued their biological researches there. His remarkable observation that fish and mammals were separate species was the first of its kind. His History of Animals records the internal and external parts of animals, modes of reproduction, diet, habitat and behaviour. His friend Theophrastus provided valuable assistance in his researches. Although Aristotle's work has been criticized for factual errors, we must remember that he hardly had any scientific instruments at his disposal. Also, the practice of applying mathematical formulae to science was not widely prevalent. The astounding number of samples he collected was in itself a stupendous task. Of course, the king of Macedon had made hundreds of assistants available to him. He sent them to far off places to collect samples,

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which he scrutinized. Thus Aristotle quietly founded a subject so fascinating and useful that even today, after two millennia, we are finding new information and new uses of biology. He worked without any technological support and had to rely sometimes on second-hand information provided by fishermen and hunters. However, he submitted most of this information to rigorous observation and only then came out with his conclusions. Aristotle was soon invited by Philip II of Macedon to become the tutor to his son Alexander in 343 BC and he was to remain there for seven years.

Alexander the Great: Here it must be stated that like other city-states, Athens too was at war all the time. Macedon was one of the states with which it was intermittently at war. King Philip of Macedon had got into a treaty with Athens, but by 340BC, when the new king was ruling, the treaty was about to fall apart. Aristotle was already tutor to Alexander, who though fond on his scholarly teacher, preferred the aggressive engagements of warfare. Aristotle was appointed head of the royal academy of Macedon. He also tutored two other future kings: Ptolemy and Cassander. Aristotle encouraged Alexander toward eastern conquest, and his attitude towards Persia was unabashedly ethnocentric. In one famous example, he counsels Alexander to be 'a leader to the Greeks and a despot to the barbarians, to look after the former as after friends and relatives, and to deal with the latter as with beasts or plants'. Also, Aristotle was given the Temple of Mieza for tutoring Alexander and in return, asked Philip to free his hometown Stagira from Macedonian rule. Mieza was like a boarding school for Alexander and the children of Macedonian nobles, such as Ptolemy, Hephaestion, and Cassander, who became part of Alexander's future campaigns. They learnt about medicine, philosophy, morals, religion, logic, and art. Alexander

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was especially fond of Homer's Iliad, the heroics of which inspired him in his conquests. He would carry a copy of the epic with him, signed by Aristotle, to inspire him. He extended his empire from Greece to distant India, though he was defeated for the first time in his career by the Indian king Puru or Porus.

The Lyceum or Peripatetic School: In 335 B. C., after Alexander succeeded his father as king and conquered Athens, Aristotle went back to the city. In Athens, Plato's Academy, now run by Xenocrates, was still the leading influence on Greek thought. With Alexander's permission, Aristotle started his own school in Athens, called the Lyceum. Some scholars think that Alexander deliberately wanted a school in Athens that was not run by Athenians, but by his own people. The name of his school was inspired by Apollo Lyceus – protector of the flock against the wolf (lycos). He generally lectured as he paced up and down (peripatos or the walk), hence the name Peripatetic School. On and off, Aristotle spent most of the remainder of his life working as a teacher, researcher and writer at the Lyceum in Athens. He had the greatest respect for the vocation of teaching and often said, ' Those who know, do; those who understand teach.' It is believed that he wrote most of his treatises between 335 and 322BC, principally when he taught at the Lyceum. From the massive amount of knowledge that he disseminated, one can only imagine the vast knowledge he himself must have gathered. However much he is criticised for being inaccurate, one must acknowledge his sharp observation and capacity for assimilation of knowledge. This becomes even more remarkable because he had no technological support during those days. He had to rely on his own abilities.

Scholarly Deluge:
When Aristotle first joined the Academy, he wholeheartedly accepted Plato's viewpoint. By the 340's he wanted to reconcile natural things and abstract

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notions. Gradually, however, he realized that the Theory of Forms ignored the 'instantiated' phenomena, our everyday lives. It was a theory held by both Socrates and Plato and was about the existence of Ideas or abstract Forms in some unknown plane, which contained the notions of our everyday objects. We understand everyday phenomena because we have an intuitive notion of their being. Their essence can be found in the Forms that exist away from this familiar world. Socrates and Plato believed that we understand phenomena and ideas even without knowing about them first-hand, because we are reborn several times, and the soul remembers the Forms from a different plane. Aristotle was later disdainful of such a notion and criticized the same as 'nonsensical'. He once remarked, 'Probable impossibilities are to be preferred to improbable possibilities'. Once Aristotle started writing down his ideas, his conclusions from his numerous studies, there was no stopping him. He did not write in the way his teacher wrote. Instead of writing in the dialogue form, his manuscripts were in the form of treatises or detailed essays that include titles such as the *Metaphysics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Organon*, the *Poetics*, *On Meteorology*, *On Animals*, *On Dissections*, and so on. There is hardly a subject on which he has not written. Unfortunately what remains with us is a disparate bunch of treatises, more as informal notes than as well-written and planned documents, unlike those of Plato. Hence, it would be unwise to look for a unifying theme in these essays. According to British professor Brian Magee, "He was regarded as the authority for hundreds of years during the Middle Ages... Thomas Aquinas (Saint Aquinas, the most influential Catholic priest, philosopher and scholar of Naples during the thirteenth century) used to refer to him simply as 'the Philosopher'. Science and Philosophy: It must be clarified that there

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was no separate subject as 'science'; all such study was part of philosophy during Aristotle's time. Philosophy itself was divided in three parts: practical philosophy, consisting ethics and politics, poetical philosophy consisting of poetry and fine arts and theoretical philosophy consisting of physics, mathematics and metaphysics. He did discuss the nature of numbers, but did not make any significant contribution to mathematics. Hence, philosophy meant knowledge of a variety of things. Aristotle, learned though he was, did not see the relationship between mathematics and philosophy. He also did not realize that we did not live in a geocentric universe - that the sun was at the centre of our world. As we have seen, he did not believe that forms had a separate life. If it was a dog we were looking at, then its form was within the dog, not outside it. The idea of the dog existed because a dog existed. This was opposed to his teacher's notion that the forms are separate from the phenomena that we perceive. He did accept that some things such as 'evil' are abstract and may have universal forms, but most things within the human experience were 'instantiated' or were actually there. Fundamental Belief: We must note that Aristotle's systematic endeavours led to his well-reasoned conclusions. He would sift the mountain of information he collected into neat groups, naming the groups and carefully explaining his deductions. In order to understand the world he felt that one must know what it is to be, what are the things that are there and how things that we see all around us in nature undergo change. He believed in what he called the Theory of Non-contradiction - one cannot say 'something is not' because 'is' cannot coexist with 'not'; 'is' and 'not' are opposites. Therefore whatever we know can only exist. In Aristotle's words, 'It is impossible for the same thing at the same time to belong and not belong to the same thing at the same time and <https://assignbuster.com/aristotle-an-undying-legacy-philosophy-essay/>

in the same respect.' In the Organon which contains his famous logical propositions or syllogisms, he tries to explain how logic comes before philosophy because it helps to understand the relationship between different components of phenomena. In Posterior Analytics Aristotle brings up syllogistic propositions such as - If A is predicated of B and B is predicated of C, then A is predicated of C as well. However primitive this may seem today, it laid the foundation of logical thought and gave the Western world a discipline in its philosophy it was lacking. Will Durant, philosopher and author, states, " We can hardly speak of any science today without employing terms which he invented...faculty, mean, category, energy, actuality, motive, principle, form - these indispensable coins of philosophic thought were minted in his mind." This discipline required clear definitions to be given of any term being discussed. It was a rigorous method for extracting definitions based on what category the subject belonged to. Aristotle created four broad categories of particular and universal phenomena and then created the famous ten further categories of substance, quality, manner, place, relation, quantity, etcetera, of which the category of substance is most important. Substance, Matter, Form: He felt that a substance had to be something which would make it distinctive. For instance, one can pick out a dog and say it is a dog, but what about its thinness? ' Thinness' cannot be called substance because it is ' separable' from the dog. The dog can be identified without its thinness, but the thinness has no substance because it is in relation to the dog. In other words, thinness has to describe something else, such as the dog. But a dog can be a dog even without the thinness. Thus substance has to be identifiable and separable. Thus the perceptible things are substances for Aristotle. These

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substances undergo change and the change can be "... in respect of substance, of quality, of quantity and of place" (Barnes). Aristotle studies change of different kinds in his treatise *Physics*. A substance must have a beginning and an end, to be changing. The question is what in the substance remains as its identity when it changes? For instance, when a house is smashed and rebuilt, what remains of it to be called a house? Aristotle says that the house is made up of bricks and mortar 'organized on certain principles' and this makes the house. Thus, the substance house has two parts - matter and form. It is the function of the house that gives it its definition. Change and its Causes: But what is change? Aristotle's definition is quite obscure: 'Change is the actuality of the potential qua such.' Barnes paraphrases this admirably: "Something is in the process of changing whenever it possesses the capacity to change and is exercising that capacity." There are four causes he lists that change things. The is the material cause due to which the matter in a substance may change; the formal cause in which the structure changes; the efficient cause works when there are external reasons for change and the last, and most important is the final cause often called teleological form of explanation. The telos or end towards which a substance moves is the attainment of its highest potential or entelechy. Thus, a body is functionally organized in such a manner that it can perform the various tasks of life, a structure he calls 'entelechy'. Brian Magee opines, "He applied the same principle to non-living things...the essence of an object is what it does, its function." He believed that 'Nature does nothing in vain'. Horses do not have horns, but they have strong hooves to help them achieve their objective - running fast and through uneven terrain. His teleology is one of the most commonsense explanations

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to problems about which many philosophers have tied themselves up in knots. He also believed that to derive the knowledge about different substances, one must rely on one's perception of the world. Ultimately, it is through one's perception and experience that one can get knowledge. But he has been criticized for ignoring the fact that sense perceptions can be unreliable and are relative in nature. He never answered his critics on this issue. He has also been criticised as someone who 'surrounds the difficulty of his subject with the obscurity of his language, and thus avoids refutation - producing darkness, like a squid, in order to make himself hard to capture'. The Question of G/god: Aristotle worshipped the Greek gods like everyone else. He did not set much store by the Theory of Forms and thus continued with his own beliefs. In Meteorology he discusses the 'exhalation' or evaporation being given off by earth. Other heavenly bodies suspended in mid air influence the environment. According to Barnes, Aristotle believed that the first principles or primary substances resided in heaven and are divine. He named the fifth element 'quintessence' and believed that the heavenly bodies are alive and intelligent. He believed that God started motion; he called God *primum mobile* immotion or the unmoved mover. In Metaphysics he discusses the fact that God is 'incorporeal, indivisible, spaceless, sexless, passionless, changeless, perfect and eternal'. Aristotle's God only contemplates; He is pure energy, driving everything to motion, to achieve their purpose, giving the world its form. Many causes determine an event, but the final cause is most important because it determines purpose. For example, it is not by accident that cows have weak teeth. They do not need tough teeth because as ruminating animals, they have four stomachs for easy digestion! He gives many examples to show a design in everything

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that goes on in the world. Ultimately, it is the internal structure that determines the function of anything and not some Form that exists in some other plane. On Psuche or the Soul: 'Soul' is a loose translation of the term - it is more appropriate to call it the life principle or the animating principle. Strangely enough, Aristotle thought that the soul could not exist without the body. Aristotle tried to define soul by saying that every natural body that has organs has a soul and later, that 'a soul is a principle of the powers of nutrition, perception, thought and movement'. The soul then is supposed to embody those skills and powers which will help the owner to achieve its functions and possess skills. In this he seems to differ from Plato who maintained that souls can be reborn. There is a hierarchy in Aristotle's definition of soul. Those substances and creatures in the lower rungs of the world order have limited powers such as appetite or nutrition. But it is only the human soul that has knowledge and intellect. Such souls are superior because they also have motion and are in a better position to achieve 'entelechy' or the final purpose or actuality, not just potentiality. A thing may possess great potential, but unless all its faculties are finely tuned and join together in the highest possible effort, actuality or entelechy cannot be achieved. He joined this to a pragmatic truth that unless one is diligent and persevering, one cannot achieve one's goals. Hence, proper habits must be formed so that they lead to fulfilment of one's objectives. Aristotle does admit, though, that the thoughts we have can be a different part of the soul that can exist outside the body. But critics have pointed that thinking requires the help of physical parts such as the brain, which is part of the body, so how could thought exist outside the body? Aristotle does not really answer the question, though he leaves us with valuable insights into the

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workings of the inner principles. Ethics: How does all this philosophy translate to daily life? Is it really a useful tool to lighten the burden of life? Aristotle always held that 'The roots of education are bitter, but the fruits are sweet'. We can see why Aristotle went through such a painstaking process to bring home to people the place of the soul, its function, its importance, its hierarchy in different beings. In effect, he does imply that as owners of the highest faculty given to all creatures in this world, we should be more mindful of our gift of knowledge and strive to achieve the best that we can. 'One must not follow those who tell us, being humans, to think only of human things, and, being mortal, only of mortal things, but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the highest thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and value surpass everything.' (Aristotle, speaking of the intellect). The twin notions of entelechy and teleology point the way towards the achievement of our potential to become better, more efficient, more compassionate human beings. He often said, 'Quality is not an act, it's a habit'. He sincerely believed that habits made men. Aristotle believed that man's final aim in life is the achievement of eudemonia or happiness. He strongly felt that people strive to be happy. All other qualities such as virtue, honour, courage and charity had happiness as their objective. If a person found happiness, he would not need any of these separately. 'For we choose happiness for itself, and never with a view to anything further; whereas we choose honour, pleasure, intellect...because that through them we shall be made happy', he states in his treatise *The Nichomachean Ethics*. Aristotle placed friendship above many other human relationships. 'Misfortune shows those who are not really friends,' he stated. He felt friends should be only a

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few, but they should be the ones who have been tried and tested. ‘

Friendship is a single soul dwelling in two bodies’ is his constant catchphrase. To build friendships requires hard work: ‘ Wishing to be friends is quick work, but friendship is a slow ripening fruit’. He also made up the aphorism, ‘ A friend to all is a friend to none’. To be Good or Bad – Matter of Choice: Is a person born good or bad? Aristotle believes that our actions are important in this respect, and that too, voluntary actions. When people act involuntarily, it may often be due to some pressure or ignorance. For instance, if a ship’s captain is forced to dump all his cargo because of a high storm, then it is an involuntary action. It is the storm that has forced him to do so; he would not voluntarily have done so. Hence, he cannot be judged based on such an action. Aristotle further asserts that voluntary actions demonstrate the nature of a person. If we focus on improving our choices, our voluntary actions will become more praiseworthy. A good person will be able to act properly if he thinks before he acts and chooses options that are based on morally correct decisions. Hence, voluntary actions alone can be blamed or praised. One should be able to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary action before bestowing blame or praise. To choose actions that promote moral outcomes and shun those that do not will ensure that we are on the right path. Those who choose the path of evil generally keep sliding to lower levels of evil, and although they too can change, it becomes very difficult to do so. Hence, habit formation at an early stage can prevent us from choosing the wrong path. Thus, merely being born in a good environment may not ensure that a person will be good; he/she must make the correct choices in the course of life. Eudaimonia or Happiness: Aristotle prescribed certain guidelines that would help people achieve happiness.

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First, one had to strive to achieve one's potential. Half-hearted efforts would result in failure and unhappiness. He said, ' Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.' It would not be possible for an innocent or simple man to achieve such excellence. One has to be experienced enough to discriminate between vice and virtue, use proper judgement, avoid extremes and choose what is famously called the ' golden mean' - a middle path between extremes such as cowardice and bravado, stinginess and extravagance. He advised, ' Anybody can become angry - that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not within everybody's power and is not easy'. He firmly rejected sense pleasures as they were impediments to happiness. These had to be kept under strict control, if one were to attain to the golden mean. He was against a political career for the same reason - a politician is more interested in others' affairs than in his own inner life. In other words, improving the inner as well as outer life should be a constant endeavour, if one has to achieve one's objectives. Aristotle's Ideal Man: ' Suffering becomes beautiful when anyone bears great calamities with cheerfulness, not through insensibility but through greatness of mind.' This is one of the premier qualities of the ideal man. He also must have courage to face tribulations or while taking decisions. ' The ultimate value of life depends upon awareness and the power of contemplation rather than upon mere survival.' Aristotle was also against the idea of money-making and usury or earning interest on money, which would corrupt a person's soul. The ideal man should be more

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willing to be of service to others than expecting to receive anything. He would have to be frank and open, not slavish. It is mentality that makes a person a slave, not absence of wealth. The ideal man would be a private person, not showy or boastful, unmindful of blame or praise, lacking malice and not in awe of anything. ' It is best to rise from life as from a banquet, neither thirsty nor drunken' he suggested. Fortunately, though, Aristotle had nothing against art and poetry. Unlike his teacher Plato, who shunned poetry and art as mere imitation, Aristotle felt that Homer was the ideal poet and that it was natural for people to indulge in art and poetry not only because it fulfils a need for emotional expression, but also because it is an inner impulse. Aristotle thus was greatly interested in knowing about human pursuits and human motives rather than in mere abstractions.