

The possessions of  
virtue leads to a  
happy life



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Most authoritative sciences have been substantiated after a lot of research and accepted by authorities in their respective fields, work not only for the individual good but also for the collective group. Though procuring individual good is not a bad thing, the good brought about for a collective group, such as a city or a country is much more higher and nobler because it is for the human good, as opposed to the individual good. Therefore, gaining knowledge of the good is a crucial part of our lives. There is a vast diversity where goods are concerned.

According to Aristotle, “ Knowledge of the matters that concern political science will prove beneficial to those who follow reason both in shaping their desires and in acting. ” (Nicomachean Ethics, 1095a- 3) Political science is one of the authoritative sciences that have guiding principles that would prove beneficial for those who want to live life with great self-restraint, because it helps to mold or shape their actions and desires. The quality of self- restraint is a virtue by itself and therefore, possessing this virtue leads to a happy life.

The possession of the friendship of virtue leads to a happy life. Every individual makes rational choices or does actions to attain the outcome which is good. However, the virtue of good is not something that is universal, because good is compartmentalized based upon its substance, its quality and its relation. Since they are three different things, it is not possible to give all of them a common Form. Good can be divided into two – good for the sake of itself and good for the sake of something else.

The masses look upon the virtue of happiness through enjoyment and pleasure, but “ sophisticated people, men of action, see happiness as an honor, since honor is pretty much the end of political life”. (Nicomachean Ethics, 1096a- 5) Virtues such as honour, intellect or pleasure are chosen by us because it gives us happiness and the common notion according to Aristotle is that good is “ that for the sake of which other things are done. ” (Nicomachean Ethics, 1097b -7) The possession of virtues of character leads to a happy life.

In most cases, all our rational choices and all our actions are usually motivated and directed towards acquiring some good and mostly it acts as a means to other ends. Therefore, when we pursue good outcomes for the sake of something else, it is not considered complete. However, “ we choose them also for the sake of happiness, on the assumption that through them we shall live a life of happiness. ” (Nicomachean Ethics, 1097b- 7) The character of the virtue of happiness is said to be complete by itself, because it is pursued for the sake of itself and not for the sake of other things.

By virtue of its character, ‘ self sufficiency’ is also believed to be completely good because it is a worthy choice and it serves to make life worth living. When “ the characteristic activity of a human being is an activity of the soul, in accordance with reason, or at least not entirely lacking it; and if we say that the characteristic activity of anything is the same in kind as that of a good thing of the same type” (Nicomachean Ethics, 1098a – 7) it is considered to be most complete. The possession of contemplation leads to a happy life.

According to Aristotle, there are three chief life types - " the life of enjoyment, the life of politics, and thirdly the life of contemplation. "

(Nicomachean Ethics, 1096a - 5) There are people who view happiness as a way of pleasure and enjoyment, there are others who derive happiness by pursuing a life of politics and the third type are those who get happiness by leading or pursuing a life of contemplation.

For this category of people, making money and gaining wealth is what they pursue and they are valued for what wealth they possess and not valued for themselves. Wealth is clearly not the good we are seeking, since it is merely useful, for getting something else. " (Nicomachean Ethics, 1096a - 5) This is not a favored way of life because this is not the kind of good we are seeking for happiness and does not serve the right purpose. The virtue of happiness is a good in itself and not pursued for the sake of other things.

Aristotle explains that " Some think that happiness is virtue, some practical wisdom, others a kind of wisdom, while others think it is a combination of these or one of these along with more or less pleasure. (Nicomachean Ethics, 1099a - 8) However, for those who look upon happiness as a virtue and pursue it with sincerity and nobility, then life becomes harmonious. Any action pursued in accordance with virtue is noble and has pleasant outcomes and hence Happiness is believed to be the noblest and most pleasant thing when compared to others. For such happy people, life is pleasant and peaceful and they naturally extend that happiness to others around them.