**BOOK ONE**

- **Studying the Good**
  1094a1 Every activity aims at a good, so the Good seems to be what they all aiming at. 63
  1094a4 All activities involve ends and means, and ends (which we want for their own sake) are more important than means. 63
  1094a30 Politics is the science we must pursue to know the good, as it involves the chief aim of the whole community. 64
  1094b12 We mustn't expect too much precision. After all, some people think goodness is just convention. 64
  1094b28 A trained mind aims for the appropriate degree of precision in each subject. 65
  1094b32 Suitable students of this subject must be educated, practically experienced, and live by principles, not feelings. 65

- **The Aim of Life**
  1095a14 We all agree the highest practical good is eudaimonia, but disagree over what that is, and even change our minds. 66
  1095a26 Some people claim there is a single good, over and above the many goods involved in eudaimonia. 66
  1095a30 In this study we must start from the facts and work towards the principles, not the other way around. 67
  1095b16 Many people consider pleasure the good, but they are mostly uneducated, and pleasure is what cattle prefer. 68
  1095b24 The educated often prefer the pursuit of honour in political life, but that depends on other people, and is self-deceptive 68
  1095b30 Some people just want to be good in public life, but you can be good while doing nothing, or suffering utter misery. 68
  1096a4 Contemplation is a possible good life (postponed till later), and wealth is not the good, as it is just a means to an end. 69

- **Many Goods, not One**
  1096a16 We need to refute Plato’s theory of the Forms, which first of all cannot exist for properties which are relative. 69
  1096a24 Since things belong in many categories, there cannot be one Form (and good) which defines them. 70
  1096b27 Each man science focuses on one idea, but there are many sciences, so there must be many ideas (and goods). 70
  1096b32 The idea of a ‘man’ and of pure ‘man-in-himself’ seem the same, and the good will be the same for both of them. 70
  1096b4 An eternal Form of good is no better than a temporary good, just as whiteness is not whiter if it is eternal. 70
  1096b9 If only things good in themselves have Forms (intelligence, sight, pleasure, honour), they still have different definitions. 71
  1096b30 Even if there is one supreme Good which things have in common, it cannot be acted upon, or attained by man. 72
  1096b33 You may say the Good helps us attain individual goods, but in practice human science and skill just ignores it (rightly). 72

- **Flourishing/happiness [eudaimonia]**
  1097a17 Each activity has its own good - medicine/health, strategy/victory etc. So is there one thing at which they all aim? 73
  1097a30 We are looking for the final end of all actions, which is the one chosen entirely for its own sake. 73
  1097b20 Eudaimonia is a fully self-sufficient and perfect end, and it is what makes a social human life desirable in itself. 74
  1097b24 To know eudaimonia we must know the function (ergon) of man, as the excellence of artists is found in their function. 75
  1097b28 Just as carpenters and shoemakers, and eyes and hands, have functions, so we should expect man to have a function. 75
  1097b32 We share a function with plants (growth) and animals (feeling), but they aren’t man’s proper function, which is rational. 75
  1098a18 The good for man is activity according to rational principles, and an “activity of the soul in accordance with virtue”. 76
  1098b12 Goods are classed as ‘external’, ‘of the soul’, and ‘of the body’, but the only true goods for man must be of the soul. 78
  1098b21 We have given a broad definition of human goods, which can include virtue, prudence, wisdom and external goods. 78
  1099a6 Eudaimonia must involve activity rather than a state, just as the Olympic champion is the winner, not the strongest. 78
  1099a19 The eudaimon life is innately pleasant, because virtue is only genuine if it is enjoyed for its own sake. 79
  1099b6 Eudaimonia requires external goods as well as virtue, because they make virtue possible, and life is bad without them. 80
  1099b10 Presumably eudaimonia is something we can achieve by effort, rather than by divine gift, or by luck. 80
  1099b31 Animals and children cannot be eudaimon, because they do not have a capacity for fine (kalon) deeds. 81
  1100a6 Eudaimonia needs complete goodness and a complete life; King Priam had a miserable life because of its ending. 81
  1100a10 “Call no man happy until he is dead” is a paradox if eudaimonia is activity - yet dishonour and family disaster can occur 82
  1101a7 It is clear that aspects of eudaimonia can be influenced for a while after death, but ultimately it is pure and unchanged. 84
  1101a12 A happy man, then, is one who acts in accordance with complete virtue, with adequate external goods, throughout a life. 84
  1101b25 One indication that eudaimonia is the ideal is that we don’t praise and encourage it, but just call it a ‘blessed’ state. 86

- **The soul [psyché]**
  1102a18 For humans the good is a matter of the soul, not the body, so an expert on morality must understand psychology. 88
  1102a31 One part of the soul is vegetative, but we share that with plants, it operates during sleep, and is irrelevant to morality. 88
  1102b13 A second part of the soul is irrational, but can be influenced by reason. Akrasia is when this part opposes reason. 89
  1102b25 Enkrateia is when this part is controlled by reason, and true virtue is when this part is in harmony with reason. 89
  1102b32 Our use of encouragement and blame shows this part can be influenced. If it is rational, we must divide reason in two. 90

- **Human virtue/excellence [areté]**
  1103a4 We divide human virtues up in accordance with the way we distinguish the parts of the soul. 90
  1103b7 The intellectual virtues are states of mind, such as wisdom, understanding and practical reason (phronesis). 90
  1103b8 The moral virtues are qualities of character, such as liberality, patience and temperance. 90


**Habit and education**

- The intellectual virtues are created and developed by instruction, and need time and experience.
- The moral virtues are the result of habit, and so are not totally natural (you can't train stones to rise, or fire to fall!).
- We are, however, naturally suited to receive moral virtue, so virtue is neither with nor against nature.
- Natural faculties are given to us, and we then use them (like sight), but the moral faculty is developed, like musical skill.
- Virtue requires activity, so we become just, temperate and brave by regularly performing such deeds.
- If we want to acquire good character and virtue, we must perform good actions in order to train the right dispositions.
- We must take for granted that we all want to follow the right principle when we find it.

**Defining virtue**

- Virtue is either a pure feeling (e.g. anger), or a faculty (ability to feel anger), or a disposition (tendency to be angry).
- We are not called good or praised because of feelings or faculties, but for dispositions, which involve choice.
- Virtue is a disposition which makes someone an excellent person who performs their function well.

**The Mean**

- The 'mean' in relation to things is the mid-point between them, but the mean in relation to us is more relative.
- The mean amount of food to eat depends on whether you are a normal person or Milo the wrestler.
- Craftsmen aim at the mean between excess and deficiency, and so should virtue (which has even higher standards).
- Feelings and actions can be excessive, but are virtuous if the time, ground, people, motive and way are all appropriate.
- For each virtue there is one true mean, but many excesses and deficiencies, which is why virtue is so difficult.
- Not all actions and feelings involve the mean, because some are just right, and others are just wrong (like adultery).
- In the area of confidence, the excess is rashness, the deficiency is cowardice, and the mean is courage.
- In the area of pleasure, the excess is licentiousness, the deficiency is 'insensibility', and the mean is temperance.
- In the area of minor giving, the excess is prodigality, the deficiency is illiberality, and the mean is liberality.
- In the area of major giving, the excess is vulgarity, the deficiency is pettiness, and the mean is magnificence.
- In the area of major honour, the excess is vanity, the deficiency is weakness, and the mean magnanimity.
- In the area of minor honour, the excess is ambition, the deficiency is unambitiousness, and the mean is right ambition.
- In the area of anger, the excess is irascibility, the deficiency is lack of spirit, and the mean is patience.
- In the area of truth, the excess is boastfulness, the deficiency is irony, and the mean is truthfulness.
- In the area of social pleasure, the excess is buffoonery, and deficiency is boorishness, and the mean is wit.
- In the area of social relations, the excess is flatness, the deficiency is ill temper, and the mean is friendliness.
- There are also mean states of pure feelings which are not true virtues, such as modesty and righteous indignation.
- The mean is in opposition to both of the extremes (which criticise the mean), and they greatly oppose one another.
- Usually one extreme is similar to the mean (rashness and courage), while the other (cowardice) is more opposed to it.
- From our point of view the extreme with the strongest pull (usually pleasure) is the one most opposed to the mean.
- To hit the mean we must, first, steer away from the contrary which is most opposed to and furthest from the mean.
- Second, we must know what tempts us personally away from the mean (especially through pleasure) and avoid that.
- Third, we must train ourselves to guard especially against the lure of pleasure in all things.

**Responsibility**

- Students and legislators must determine the limits of voluntary and involuntary, in order to determine responsibility.
- In some acts people seem to have no choice, but (strictly) an act is voluntary if the limb movement starts in the person.
- Although we readily forgive some voluntary wrongs, there are limits, and death is preferable to some extreme actions.
- Particular actions are usually voluntary (strictly), but the question is what types of action are to be preferred and done.
- We can't say pleasant and admirable acts are to be preferred, as that covers all actions, so they are all compulsory!
- We call acts done from ignorance which cause pain and regret involuntary, but other such acts are just non-voluntary.
- Voluntary actions (which may be pardoned) result from ignorance of particulars, not of self-benefit or of morality.
- Possible ignorance of particulars is of 1) the agent himself, 2) the nature of the action, 3) the object the action aims at, 4) the instrument used in the action, 5) the aim of the action, or 6) the manner of the action. Regret is also vital.
- Acts aren't involuntary if caused by desires (as that applies to all actions, and certainly excludes children and animals).
- There are some things which we ought to desire (health and learning), and some things at which we ought to be angry.
- Feelings are as much a part of human nature as reason, so it is appropriate to act according to them (not 'involuntary').
• **Choice** [proaireis]

We must now discuss choice, because it is central to moral goodness, and reveals character better than actual actions.

Animals and children sometimes act voluntarily, but not from choice; the latter is seen in control, or failure of control.

Choice is not the same as desire (which can oppose choice), or temper (which is unpremeditated).

Nor is choice the same as wish (which may be for the impossible), or opinion (which is unlimited, and aims at truth).

People who are good at forming opinions are not necessarily good at choosing the best actions.

• **Deliberation** [bouleusis]

We don't deliberate about scientific or mathematical truths, but only about variable practical matters within our power.

Deliberation is about means, not ends; we don't deliberate about health or social order, but about treatment and laws.

Deliberation is like maths analysis, in that we work back from the desired result to the first (possible) step to be taken.

Deliberation is not concerned with particular facts ("is it properly cooked"?), as this is a matter of sense perception.

The good

If what choice aims at is the actual good, it follows that a bad choice was not aiming at something actually wanted.

If, on the other hand, choice aims at apparent good, then presumably nothing is withoutable in itself, and good is relative.

The solution is that all want the actual good, but we aim at the apparent good, with the virtuous person getting it right.

The commonest error is to think the good is pleasure (which it is not), so people just pursue pleasure and avoid pain.

• **Responsibility** (cont)

Moral virtue is related to means (not ends), and since means are objects of choice, virtue and vice are in our control.

Punishments and rewards aim at restraint and encouragement, so base and fine actions are obviously under our control.

We punish acts done drunkenly or in ignorance of law, as (while ignorance is an excuse) the ignorance is controllable.

Having an innately bad character is no excuse, as any perceptive person can see that bad behaviour trains us in vice.

Eventually a bad character becomes fixed (as bad living can fix bad health or physique), but it is still the person's fault.

Some may object that perception of the true good is a natural gift, and vice is a forgivable misjudgement of the good.

But vice must be as voluntary as virtue, and even if perception of the good end is natural, the means are in our control.

(Summary of what is required for a virtuous character)

• **Seeking the right principle**

We know that we should follow the mean, as dictated by the right principle, but we need more practical guidance.

The rational part of the soul consists of deliberation (of changeable things) and calculation (of what never changes).

The virtue of calculation is pure truth, and the virtue of deliberation is truth which corresponds to right appetite.

There are five ways for the mind to arrive at truth: technical skill, science, practical reason, wisdom and intuition.

Science (episteme) knows things which are necessary (and eternal) and is built up on demonstrable inductive principles.

Technical skill (techné) is a truly reasoned productive state, and is concerned with variable things, and chance.

Practical reason (phronesis) is right deliberation of what is good and advantageous, involving variables not necessities.

Practical reason is not a skill, but a virtue of the part of the rational soul which forms opinions (rather than science).

Intuition (nous) is the faculty which grasps first principles directly, and is used by science to demonstrate necessities.

Wisdom (sophia) is greater than practical reason or political science, since those are good relative to types of existence.

So wisdom combines intuition of first principles and demonstrative science, and is knowledge of what is most valuable.

• **Practical reason** [phronesis - 'prudence']

Like Thales, one can be wise but lack practical reason, which deals with particulars, and with the good for humans.

It is not, for example, enough to know that light meat is healthy; you must actually know which meats are light.

Politics is practical reason in legislation and administration, and personal decisions can't be separated from politics.

That practical reason requires knowledge of particulars is shown by the fact that lots of experience is required for it.

Intuition grasps first principles, and science demonstrates necessities, but phronesis perceives the last particular step.

• **Other faculties**

Good deliberation (euboulia) is a slow enquiry which leads to an advantageous action leading towards a good end.

Understanding (suneisis) is distinct from practical reason, because it produces judgements (not actions) about problems.

Judgement (gnomé) is concerned with assessing in a sympathetic way what is fair.

These faculties overlap, and also tend to be found together in good people.

Intuition is not only found in grasping first principles, but also in perceiving the particulars that produce general rules.

Of some of these abilities are the gift of nature, but true wisdom is built on experience, and can be as reliable as a proof.

• **Wisdom**

What use is wisdom (sophia)? It seems useless, like knowledge of fitness training if you don't actually get fit.

The same could be said of practical reason, which seems unneeded by those already virtuous, and wasted on the wicked.

But they are both virtues in themselves, with virtue ensuring good ends, and practical reason the right means.

• **Practical reason** [phronesis] (cont)

Some just acts are done unwillingly or ignorantly, so one must know the faculty which ensures correct performance.

Wickedness distorts the vision, so the wicked can have cleverness (deinotes), but not true practical reason.

Natural virtues seem to be found in children and animals, but they can be harmful without the presence of intelligence.

Socrates was wrong in thinking that all the virtues are a form of reason or knowledge, but the virtues do imply reason.

The virtues don't just follow the right principle (phronesis), but they necessarily imply its existence.

While it is possible to possess natural virtues independently, practical reason implies all the virtues, and unifies them.

Practical reason is supreme in the world of action and virtue, but merely serves the higher life of wisdom.
BOOK TEN

- **Pleasure as the Good**

  172a26 Some argue that pleasure is the Good, and others that it is bad (either in itself, or because of its bad influence).

  172a33 Both views seem to be wrong, because they conflict with the evidence of our senses.

  172b10 Eudoxus said pleasure is the good, because all creatures are attracted by it, and shun pain (as ends, not means).

  172b24 He also claimed pleasure is the good as its addition makes a thing more desirable (but that could apply to intelligence!).

  172b28 There cannot be one Good, since all sorts of things can be added which make a thing better.

- **Defence of pleasure**

  173a3 It must also be wrong to say pleasure is bad, since all creatures (even very intelligent humans) are attracted to it.

  173a6 We can't say that pleasure is the good because pain is bad, since an evil can be opposed to another evil.

  173a17 Pleasure can't fail to be good just because it is variable (unlike 'the Good'), as this will also apply to justice and bravery.

  173a25 Also, pleasure may be a very pure thing, even though it comes in different amounts (just as a little health is still health).

  173a28 It is claimed that, unlike the Good, pleasure is a process, but pleasure is the result of a process, not the process itself.

  173b13 The theory that pleasure is replenishment of a deficiency is wrong. It may fit eating, but it doesn't fit learning or smell.

  173b20 To the claim that there are "bad pleasures", we may say that they are only pleasant to diseased dispositions.

  173b25 We may also say that the pleasure is intrinsically good, but the means (treason or theft) may lack nobility (kalon).

- **Against pleasure**

  174a2 We would not choose to have the intellect of a child, even if we continued to take enormous pleasure in childish things.

  174a4 No one would choose to enjoy something they knew was shameful, even if no pain resulted from it.

  174a6 We want all sorts of things even if they involve no pleasure, such as sight, memory, knowledge, and the virtues.

  174a10 We conclude that pleasure is not the Good, that some pleasures are undesirable, and that some pleasures are superior.

- **Types of pleasure**

  174a14 Like seeing, pleasure is complete in itself, and not a process, because it does not move towards a state of completion.

  174b22 Each sense has its own distinctive pleasure, which perfects the activity when the sense is healthy and the object worthy.

  175a3 We cannot feel pleasure continuously, because we become fatigued, and often the object loses the necessary novelty.

  175a10 Life itself is perfected by pleasure, and we are all eager to live, and cannot separate pleasure from living.

  175a31 There are many kinds of pleasure, corresponding to each activity, and an activity is improved if it is done with pleasure.

  175b2 Thus an activity is hindered by pleasure from another activity, as when hearing good flute-playing during a discussion.

  175b12 We are always drawn to the more pleasurable of two activities, as people eat more in the theatre when the play is bad.

- **The best pleasures**

  175b26 Since each activity has its appropriate pleasure, the pleasures are good or bad according to whether the activity is.

  176a1 The pleasure of sight is better than that of touch, and intellectual pleasures are superior to sensuous pleasures.

  176a11 Unlike animals, humans are very diverse in the pleasure or pain they feel, but the good man's view is the true one.

  176a24 If some pleasures are generally agreed to be shameful, then they are not pleasures at all (except to corrupted people).

  176a27 The highest pleasures are the most human ones, which are those experienced by the supremely eudaimon man.

- **Amusement**

  176a32 Eudaimonia is a self-sufficient activity which is chosen for its own sake, and accords with what is fine and good.

  176b11 Amusement is not the aim of life, as it causes neglect, and is favoured by tyrants, bad men and children, not good men.

  176b28 It would be absurd if life's struggles were all just for amusement, but it does seem necessary as an occasional relaxation.

  177a2 The good life is serious, because it involves the better part of man, and is above the bodily pleasures of mere slaves.

- **Contemplation [theoria]**

  177a9 The highest happiness will be the activity of our ruling part, which sees the noble and divine, and this is contemplation.

  177a21 The intellect is the highest thing in us (and contemplates the finest things), and (unlike activity) it is continuous.

  177a32 The intellect also involves the finest human pleasures, and it can be completely self-sufficient, unlike the moral virtues.

  177b5 Most activity aims to achieve leisure, and yet the practical moral virtues all involve political life or warfare.

  177b20 Contemplation is based on the divine part of man, and we should pursue that, not confine ourselves to the human part.

  178a8 Thus moral goodness (of the human part) is secondary, involving human interaction, feelings and practical reason.

  178a24 Contemplation and morality need external goods; the former's needs are simple, but the latter's may be quite grand.

  178a33 For the perfection of good conduct both intentions and consequences must be good, and the latter need external goods.

  178b7 The gods as supremely happy, but they can't practise moral virtues, yet they are active, so they must contemplate.

  178b26 Lower animals can have no share in happiness, because they are unable to contemplate or study.

  179a6 Actually even moral virtue only requires modest wealth, because private citizens usually behave better than great rulers.

- **Putting virtue into practice**

  179b10 Theoretical lectures on virtue can have some effect, but most people ignore arguments, and are ruled by fear and pain.

  179b24 Good behaviour comes from nature (beyond our control), or habit, or teaching, but teaching is useless if habits are bad.

  179b31 It is hard to consistently train a young person in virtue, and they tend to resent it, so the law must reinforce the training.

  180a19 Enforcement of good habits by law is more effective than by the head of a family, yet only Sparta have done this.

  180b8 If the state won't help, individual teaching is needed, which needs universal knowledge as well as concern for the pupil.

  180b29 Good teachers of virtue must understand legislation, but this requires experience (which the sophists don't have).

  181b16 We therefore need a detailed study of constitutions, to see which type of state is well governed.