

Guide of Life, Divine Pleasure - Doc Version

Post by "Cassius" of October 24, 2019 at 9:27 AM

Another variation some say is "I don't need pleasure, all I want is to be happy," Or "happiness doesn't mean pleasure." -- Well exactly what do they think happiness is? Ask and you will find out that they have another agenda - THEIR definition of "virtue."

Thus Aristotle gives us his definition of happiness:

...the function of man is to live a certain kind of life, and this activity implies a rational principle, and the function of a good man is the good and noble performance of these, and if any action is well performed it is performed in accord with the appropriate excellence: if this is the case, then happiness turns out to be an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. (Nicomachean Ethics, 1098a13)

The Pursuit of Happiness as the Exercise of Virtue

In this last quote we can see another important feature of Aristotle's theory: the link between the concepts of happiness and virtue. Aristotle tells us that the most important factor in the effort to achieve happiness is to have a good moral character — what he calls "complete virtue." But being virtuous is not a passive state: one must act in accordance with virtue. Nor is it enough to have a few virtues; rather one must strive to possess all of them. As Aristotle writes,

He is happy who lives in accordance with complete virtue and is sufficiently equipped with external goods, not for some chance period but throughout a complete life. (Nicomachean Ethics, 1101a10)

Conclusion

In conclusion, according to Aristotle, what is happiness?

- Happiness is the ultimate end and purpose of human existence
- Happiness is not pleasure, nor is it virtue. It is the exercise of virtue.