pleasures that bring them to completion should be spoken of, in the governing sense, as the pleasures of a human being, while the rest are pleasures in a secondary and greatly diminished sense, corresponding to their activities.

Chapter 6. Now that the things having to do with the virtues, with friendships, and with pleasures have been discussed, what remains is to go through in outline what has to do with happiness, since we set this down as the end at which human things aim. And the account of it would be shorter for those who take up again what has been said before. Now we said that happiness is not an active condition,[290] since it could then be present in someone who was asleep throughout life, living the life of a vegetable, or in someone suffering the greatest misfortunes. So if these consequences are not satisfactory, but one ought instead to place happiness in some form of being-at-work, as in what was said before, and among ways of being-at-work, some are necessary and are chosen for the sake of something else while others are for their own sake, it is clear that one ought to place happiness as one of those that are chosen for their own sake and not among those that are for the sake of something else, since happiness stands in need of nothing but is self-sufficient. And those activities are chosen for their own sake from which nothing is sought beyond the being-at-work; and actions in accord with virtue seem to be of this sort, since performing actions that are beautiful and serious is something chosen for its own sake.

But so are the pleasures that come from playing, since they are not chosen for the sake of any other things; people are harmed by them more than they are benefitted, since they neglect their bodies and their property. But many of those who are considered happy escape into pastimes of this sort, and for this reason people who are charming in such ways of passing the time are highly regarded around tyrants, for they display themselves to the latter as pleasing in those things which they aim at, and the people tyrants need are of that sort. It seems, then, that these pastimes are conducive to happiness because those who are in power spend their leisure in them, but perhaps such people are no indication, since virtue does not consist in having power, nor does intelligence, and the activities that are of serious worth come from these; and if those people run off to bodily pleasures because they have no taste for pleasure that is pure and suited to people who are free, one ought not to believe, on that account, that those pleasures are more worthy of choice. Even children believe that the things valued by themselves are the best things. So it is reasonable that, just as different things appear worthwhile to children and to men, so too do different things appear worthwhile to people of a low sort and to decent people. As has been

[290] See 1098b 31-1099a 7, where happiness is compared to a prize at the Olympic games, which goes not to the best trained athlete but to the one who performs best.

said repeatedly,[291] the things that are worthwhile and pleasant to a person of serious moral stature are the ones that are so; to each person, the way of being-at-work that results from his own active condition is the most choiceworthy, and to a person of serious worth that is the activity that results from virtue.

Therefore, happiness does not consist in play, for it would even be absurd for our end to be play, and to work hard and undergo troubles all through one's life for the sake of playing. For we choose everything, 30
so to speak, for the sake of something else, except happiness, since this is the end. But to be earnest and to labor for the sake of play seems foolish and too childish. But to play in order that one might be serious, as Anacharsis says, seems to be right, since play seems like relaxation, and since people are incapable of laboring continuously, they need relaxation. So relaxation is not the end, since it comes about for the 1177a
sake of being-at-work. And the happy life seems to be in accord with virtue, and this involves seriousness and does not consist in play. And we speak of serious things as better than those that bring laughter and involve play, and say that the activity of the better part or of the better person is always the more serious, and the activity of what is better is more powerful and more conducive to happiness from the start. And any random person, or a slave, might enjoy bodily pleasures no less than the best person, but no one would grant a share of happiness to a slave, if he does not even have a share in his life. For happiness does not consist in such pastimes, but in activities in accord with virtue, as 10
was said before.

Chapter 7. But if happiness is being-at-work in accord with virtue, it is reasonable that it would be in accord with the most powerful virtue, and this would belong to the best part. Now whether this is intellect or some other part that seems by nature to rule and lead and have a conception about things that are beautiful and divine, and to be either divine itself or the most divine of the things in us, the being-at-work of this part in accord with its own proper virtue would be complete happiness. That this way of being-at-work is contemplative has been said.[292] And this would seem to be in agreement with the things said before and with the truth. For this way of being-at-work is the most 20
powerful (since the intellect is the most powerful of the things in us, and the things with which the intellect is concerned are the most pow-

[291] See 1099a 22-24, 1113a 25-33, 1166a 12-13, 1170a 14-16.

[292] This is the first time Aristotle has said this so explicitly, but it was clearly implied twice: at 1095b 14-1096a 5, by a reductio argument that rejects the claims of lives devoted to enjoyment or action to be the highest lives and leaves the contemplative life as the only candidate, and at 1143b 33-1144a 6, where contemplative wisdom was said to be dominant among those activities that constitute happiness not as a consequence of what they understand but by their mere being-at-work.

erful of the things that can be known); it is also the most continuous, for we are more able to contemplate continuously than to act in any way whatever.

And we believe that pleasure must be mixed in with happiness, and by general agreement the most pleasant of the ways of being-at-work in accord with virtue is that which goes along with wisdom; at any rate, philosophy seems to have pleasures that are wonderful in their purity and stability, and it is reasonable that the way of life of those who have knowledge is more pleasant than that of those who are seeking it. And what is referred to as self-sufficiency would be present most of all in the contemplative life, for while the wise and the just person, and the
30 rest, are in need of the things that are necessary for living, when they are sufficiently equipped with such things, a just person still needs people toward whom and with whom he will act justly, and similarly with the temperate and the courageous person and each of the others, but the wise person is able to contemplate even when he is by himself, and more so to the extent that he is the more wise. He will contemplate
1177b better, no doubt, when he has people to work with, but he is still the most self-sufficient person. And contemplation seems to be the only activity loved for its own sake, for nothing comes from it beyond the contemplating, while from things involving action we gain something for ourselves, to a greater or lesser extent, beyond the action. And happiness seems to be present in leisure, for we engage in unleisured pursuits in order that we may be at leisure, and we make war in order that we may stay at peace.

Now the activity of the virtues that involve action is present in political pursuits and in things that pertain to war, and the actions that have to do with these things seem to be unleisured—completely so with the actions involved in war (for no one chooses to make war for the sake of
10 making war, or even prepares for war in that way, since anyone would seem to be completely bloodthirsty if he were to make friends into enemies so that battles and killings might come about). But the activity of the person engaged in politics is also unleisured, and political activity achieves, beyond itself, positions of power and honors and happiness for oneself and one's fellow citizens that is different from their political life, and which it is clear that we seek as something different from it. So if, among actions in accord with the virtues, those that pertain to politics and war are pre-eminent in beauty and magnitude, but they are unleisured and aim at some end and are not chosen for their own sake, while the being-at-work of the intellect seems to excel in seriousness, and to be contemplative and aim at no end beyond itself, and to
20 have its own pleasure (which increases its activity), so that what is as self-sufficient, leisured, and unwearied as possible for a human being, and all the other things that are attributed to a blessed person, show themselves as the things that result from this way of being-at-work, then

this would be the complete happiness of a human being, if it takes in a complete span of life, for none of the things that belong to happiness is incomplete.

But such a life would be greater than what accords with a human being, for it is not insofar as one is a human being that he will live in this way, but insofar as something divine is present in him, and to the extent that this surpasses the compound being,[293] to that extent also the being-at-work of it surpasses that which results from the rest of virtue. So if the intellect is something divine as compared with a 30
human being, the life that is in accord with the intellect is divine as compared with a human life. But one should not follow those who advise us to think human thoughts, since we are human, and mortal thoughts, since we are mortal, but as far as possible one ought to be immortal and to do all things with a view toward living in accord with the most powerful thing in oneself,[294] for even if it is small in bulk, it 1178a
rises much more above everything else in power and worth. And each person would even seem to *be* this part, if it is the governing and better part; it would be strange, then, if anyone were to choose not his own life but that of something else. What was said before[295] will be fitting now too: what is appropriate by nature to each being is best and most pleasant for each, and so, for a human being, this is the life in accord with the intellect, if that most of all is a human being. Therefore this life is also the happiest.

Chapter 8. The life in accord with the rest of virtue is happy in a secondary way, since the activities that result from it are human ones. 10
For we act toward one another in ways that are just and courageous and in accord with the virtues in other respects in our dealings and necessary services and actions of all sorts, as well as in our feelings, by observing what is suitable to each, and all these appear to be human concerns. Some of them even seem to derive from the body, and in many respects virtue of character is bound up together with our feelings. And practical judgment is linked together with virtue of character, and it with practical judgment, if the sources of practical judgment are dependent upon virtues of character, while the right thing belonging to virtues of character is dependent upon practical judgment. These may also be entangled with the passions that have to do with the compound being, 20
but the virtues of the compound are of a human sort, so that the life and the happiness that are in accord with these are human as well.

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293 Our compound nature is discussed most directly at 1154b 20-31, as the source of our desire for change, even when it is for the worse, since we experience more than one kind of pleasure.

294 At 1153b 31-32, Aristotle suggests that all desire for pleasure is ultimately directed toward this highest activity; the contrary advice is given widely by poets, who include Euripides, Sophocles, and Pindar.

295 See 1170a 16-b 19, where Aristotle argues that the life most appropriate to a human being must be one shared in friendship.

But the happiness that belongs to the intellect is separate; let this much be said about it, for to be precise about it is something greater than the topic at hand.[296] And it would seem to have little need of external props, or less than virtue of character has. For both there is a need for necessary things, and let it be equal, even if someone involved in politics goes to more trouble about his body and things of that sort, since it would differ to some small extent, but for their activities there will be a great difference. For the generous person will need money
30 for performing generous acts, and so will a just person, for paying back what is due (since wishes are unseen, and even people who are not just pretend to wish to act justly), and a courageous person will need strength, if he is to accomplish any of the things that go with his virtue, and a temperate person will need opportunity—for how else will he or any of the others be manifest? It is also a matter of dispute whether the choice or the actions are more determining of virtue, since
1178b it is present in both; it is clear that the completeness of it would consist in both together, but for the actions many things are needed, and more of them to the extent that the actions are of greater magnitude and more beautiful. But for someone who contemplates there is no need of such things for his being-at-work; rather, one might say they get in the way of his contemplating. But insofar as he is a human being and lives in company with a number of people, he chooses to do the things that have to do with virtue, and thus will have need of such things in order to live a human life.

That complete happiness is a contemplative activity would also be made clear by the following consideration: we assume that the gods
10 most of all are blessed and happy, but what sort of actions will it be right to attribute to them? Acts of justice? Or will it appear ridiculous if they make contracts and return items held in trust and all that sort of thing? How about courageous acts, enduring frightening things and taking risks because that is a beautiful thing? Or generous acts? To whom will they give? And it will be absurd if they were to have a currency or any such thing. And what would their temperate acts be? Or will praising them for not having base desires be impertinent? And for someone who goes through them all, it would be obvious that the things involved in actions are small and unworthy of the gods. But surely everyone supposes that they are alive at any rate, and are
20 therefore at-work, for they are surely not asleep like Endymion.[297] But

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[296] See *Metaphysics* 1072b 14-30, and *On the Soul* 408b 1-32 and 430a 10-25. By a concentration of attention, the whole of one's life may be withdrawn, for a time, from all concerns of our compound nature, into the act of contemplation.

[297] A young shepherd given the gift of perpetual sleep, either by Selene so that he could never resist her love, or by Zeus so that he would never grow old.

when someone who is living is deprived of acting, and still more of making anything, what remains except contemplation? So the being-at-work of a god, surpassing in blessedness, would be contemplative, and so among human activities, the one most akin to this would be the most happy.

A sign of this as well is that the rest of the animals do not participate in happiness, since they are completely deprived of such an activity. For the gods, the whole of life is blessed, and for human beings it is so to the extent that there is in it some likeness to such a way of being-at-work; but none of the other animals is happy since they do not share in contemplation at all. So happiness extends as far as contemplation does, and the more it belongs to any beings to contemplate, the more it belongs to them to be happy, not incidentally but as a result 30
of contemplating, since this is worthwhile in itself. And so happiness would be some sort of contemplation. But there will also be a need of external prosperity for one who is a human being, since nature is not self-sufficient for contemplating, but there is also a need for the body to be healthy and for food and other attentions to be present. But one 1179a
certainly ought not to suppose that someone who is going to be happy will need many things or grand ones, if it is not possible to be blessed without external goods; for self-sufficiency does not consist in excess any more than action does, and it is possible for one who is not a ruler of land and sea to perform beautiful actions. For one would be capable of acting in accord with virtue from moderate means (and it is possible to see this plainly, since private people seem to perform decent actions not less than powerful people but even more), and it is sufficient if that much is present, since the life of someone who is at-work in accord with virtue will be happy.

And Solon perhaps beautifully revealed those who are happy, 10
saying they are those who have been supplied with external things in measure, who have performed the most beautiful deeds, as he supposed them, and who have lived temperately, for someone with moderate possessions is capable of acting as one ought.[298] And Anaxagoras, too, seems to have believed that the happy person is neither rich nor powerful, when he said that it would be nothing to wonder at if such a person would appear strange to most people, since they judge by externals, perceiving these alone. So the opinions of the wise seem to be in harmony with our arguments. Now such things have some trustworthiness, but the truth in matters of action is discerned from deeds and from life, since they are the determining thing in these matters. 20
So we ought to examine the things that have been said by applying

[298] This is what Solon told Croesus, who wanted to be congratulated for his riches, in Book I, Chap. 30, of Herodotus's *History*.

them to deeds and to life, and if they are in harmony with the deeds one ought to accept them, while if they are out of tune one ought to consider them just words.

But the person who is at-work with the intellect and takes care of this and is disposed in the best way toward it seems also to be most dear to the gods. For if some care for human beings comes from the gods, as is believed, then it would also be reasonable for them to delight in what is best and most akin to them (and this would be the intellect), and to do good in return to those who love and honor this most, since such people care for the things that are dear to them, and also act rightly
30 and beautifully. And it is not unclear that all these things belong most of all to one who is wise. Therefore he is most dear to the gods, and it is likely that the same person is the happiest. So in this way too, a wise person would be the most happy.

Chapter 9. Now if what has to do with happiness as well as with the virtues, and also with friendship and pleasure, has been sufficiently discussed in outline, ought one to assume that our chosen task has its
1179b end? Or, as has been said,[299] is the end in matters of action not contemplating and knowing each of them but rather doing them? Then it is not sufficient to know about virtue, but one must try to have it and use it, unless there is some other way that we become good. Now if discourses by themselves were sufficient for making people decent, then justly "they would take many large fees," as Theognis says,[300] and one would need to provide them, but as things are, discourses appear to have the power to encourage and stimulate open-natured young people, and would make a well-born character that loves what is truly beautiful
10 be inspired with virtue, but they are unable to encourage most people toward what is beautiful and good. For they are naturally obedient not to respect but to fear, and refrain from base actions not on account of shame but on account of penalties. For since they live by feelings, they pursue the pleasures that they are comfortable with and the things by means of which these will come about, and avoid the pains opposed to these pleasures, while they have no notion of what is beautiful and truly pleasant, having had no taste of it. What sort of discourse, then,

[299] The reference is to the beginning of Bk. II, Chap. 2. There is a mutual interdependence involved here that has given rise to extensive debate. Contemplative activity is identified as our highest and most complete happiness, but it is insufficient for anything that depends upon action. The life of action is called a happy life in only a secondary way, but it appears to be an indispensable foundation for a contemplative life, since wisdom is not mere cleverness, but requires good character and right choices. At the end of Bk. VII, Aristotle focused on the difficulty of satisfying a complex nature; here he seems to be emphasizing the complex conditions that permit such satisfaction.

[300] In verses 432-434, the fees Theognis imagines are those doctors could get if they could cure the human heart of vice and blindly self-destructive passion.