

## Hidden Patterns

### Aristotle and the Hierarchy of Goods

#### Sequence of Goods

- **Question:** Do all actions tend towards a supreme good?
- **Aristotle's View:** In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle suggests that everything tends towards some good. One action leads to another good, resulting in a sequence of goods.
- **Supreme Good:** The ultimate question is whether all goods lead to a supreme good.

#### Dante's Interpretation

- **Dante's Adaptation:** Dante took Aristotle's concept further by stating that "everything we do, we do out of love," and that love drives us towards perceived goods. However, some goods are **relative** to others.
- **Example:** Eating is a good, but if made into a supreme good (like overeating), it causes problems, such as gaining weight. Goods need to be aligned properly.
- **Quote:** "Everything we do, we do out of love."

#### Misplaced Goods and Evil

- **Sin and Misplaced Goods:** In Christian thought, every sin is a misplaced good. A good that is not in its proper place leads to disorder.
- **Example:** Loving food too much can lead to overeating. Love must be placed correctly within a hierarchy of goods.
- **Aristotle's Agreement:** Evil, according to Aristotle and Christian thought, has no independent existence. It is simply a **misplaced good**.

### Hierarchy of Goods in Christian Thought

#### Scaling Goods

- **Proper Alignment:** Goods need to be subjected to higher goods.
- **Example:** Eating (a good) should be aligned with general health (a higher good), but health itself can't be the supreme good.

- Some people, like gym obsessives, make physical health their supreme good, but it leads to an imbalanced life.

### **Dante's Depiction of Hell**

- In Dante's *Inferno*, people in hell are obsessed with a good so much that they make it a god, leading them to sacrifice everything.
- **Example:** A person cheats on their spouse, sacrificing their family for their passion, which is a misplaced good.

### **Virtue and the Supreme Good**

- **Virtue as Higher Goods:** Christians like Dante propose that **virtues** (truth, love, hope, charity) represent higher goods. Aligning actions with virtues leads to a well-functioning life.
- **Quote:** "If you subject your desires to virtues, they will be properly aligned, and things will scale properly."

### **Highest Image of Reality**

- **Love and Multiplicity:** The highest good, according to Christian mystics, is **being itself** or **love**.
- **Love's Definition:** Love is the coexistence of unity and multiplicity. True love desires the other's existence separate from oneself, yet also unites.
- **Quote:** "God is love" means that love is the ultimate balance of unity and multiplicity.

## **Reductionism and the Return to a Higher View**

### **Material Reductionism**

- **Modern Fracture in Thought:** The modern world tends to reduce everything to its material parts (reductionism). Thousands of years ago, a fracture occurred in thought, leading to the belief that the purpose (telos) of things was ignored.
- **Question:** How do we recover the supernatural view of reality?

### **Jordan Peterson's Approach**

- **Start with the Individual:** Begin by transforming yourself. Like a seed, you create ripples, influencing those around you.
- **Quote:** "Start with you, and then the ripples will manifest."

### **Family and Rituals**

- **Family Unity:** Families have rituals that bind them together. For example, a family meal is a "little religious ceremony" and mirrors the structure of larger religious practices.
- **Despair and Apocalypse:** Many feel despair when they look at the state of the world, especially with the rise of AI and social fabric breakdowns. But what you can do is transform your own life and those around you.

### **Celebration of Goods**

- **Inversion of Goods:** Celebrating higher goods is essential. When higher goods are lost (e.g., celebrating Christmas for its meaning), lower goods (consumerism) take over.
- **Example:** Christmas becomes about getting deals on Boxing Day, or Thanksgiving becomes about Black Friday.
- **Quote:** "You can see an inversion of celebration, where giving gifts (a good) becomes about getting stuff."

## **"Just" as a Tripwire**

### **The Danger of "Just"**

- **"Just Wrong":** The word "just" often hides a blind spot and reduces complex moral reasoning into simple, unthoughtful judgments.
- **Example:** Killing is not "just wrong" in all circumstances. It's wrong when misplaced.
- **Quote:** "Everything has its place. It's when something is out of place that it's wrong."

### **Joe Rogan's "Just Apes" Statement**

- **Biological Reductionism:** Statements like "we're just apes" reduce humans to biological processes and ignore higher goods, leading to blind spots.
- **Example:** Training the body is important, but it must be aligned with higher goods like community or family.

## The Role of Higher Goods

### Family and Community as Higher Goods

- **Subjugating Goods:** Aligning lower goods (e.g., physical training) to higher goods (e.g., family, community) is essential. Otherwise, lower goods can take over life and lead to dissatisfaction.
- **Example:** Obsession with physical activity may lead to misery in old age if it's not placed within a hierarchy of higher goods.
- **Quote:** "Those higher goods are the ones that will carry you through."

## Establishing Unity and Transcendence

### The Role of Transcendence

- **Transcending the Self:** In ancient practices, like Jacob raising the stone, unity and purpose were established through appealing to something transcendent.
- **Modern Psychology's Limit:** Modern pop psychology tends to focus on the self without connecting to something higher. But real transformation requires a connection to higher, transcendent goods.
- **Quote:** "To lift a pillar in your heart, it has to be anointed by something which transcends you."

### Binding to Higher Goods

- **Small Unities:** Joining a community, a sports team, or a cause can create small unities that help stabilize you, but they must be tied to higher goods like family or religious values for long-term stability.
- **Quote:** "If you play a sport, but you also have a good family, your pillar is way more solid."

## Sam Harris and the Mystical Life

### Sam Harris's Mockery of Mysticism

- **Sam Harris's Recipe Mockery:** Harris mocked the mystical interpretation of a recipe, arguing that people project mystical meanings where none exist.
- **Response:** Recipes and other activities are deeply meaningful as they symbolize

unity and the ordering of goods.

- **Quote:** "Recipes are hierarchies of being, and they represent the gathering of multiplicities into a unity."

### **The Hierarchy of Goods in Food**

- **Spice as Idiosyncrasy:** In recipes, the main food represents identity, while spices represent idiosyncrasy (variation). The hierarchy of food mirrors the hierarchy of goods.
- **Quote:** "Pleasure has to be subjugated to the perpetuation of being."

### **The Religious Nature of Food**

- **Religious Dimensions:** Recipes often have religious dimensions, as food is prepared and shared to bind people together in celebration or worship.
- **Example:** Feasting and fasting are different modes of eating that correspond to spiritual goals.

## **Mythological Patterns in Society**

### **Conspiracy Theories and Patterns**

- **Paying Attention to Myths:** Even outlandish conspiracy theories (e.g., 5G causing Covid, lizard people) often reflect underlying truths or mythological patterns. These stories reveal a deeper narrative about distrust in leadership and societal breakdown.
- **Quote:** "Attention isn't arbitrary. Care isn't arbitrary. If a story is landing in culture, there's something to pay attention to."

### **Lizard People as a Myth**

- **Why Lizard People?:** The myth of lizard people leading society reflects a deeper fear that elites are alien and do not have the people's good in mind, much like the serpent in the Garden of Eden.
- **Quote:** "Leaders are supposed to care for us, but sometimes they act like snakes, with their own hidden agendas."

## Conclusion

- **Understanding Patterns:** The approach of reducing ideas to material causes often misses deeper, mythological truths. Recognizing these patterns helps explain societal behavior and the stories that emerge in culture.
- **Quote:** "If you pull away from material causes and look at the story, you'll see what's going on."