Deal With It

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Baruch Spinoza was a Dutch philosopher of the 17th century. He is one of the earliest philosopher of enlightenment and contemporary biblical criticism. His philosophical studies are branched into politics, ethics and human mind. His emphasis on the concept of desire that it is the essence of a man’s ethical pursuit. In his essay he has mentioned the ontological principle of desire and has mentioned the definitions of affects that how our desires affect all the things in this world the very modes of this universe. Every action that a man does has a significant dynamic striving or conatus that continues to exist in this world. Every determined action driven by human desires possess different stages of power and it is based on its ability to persist in being (Nadler, 2001). The impact of the decisions and emotions associated with these are divided into either happiness or sadness and it changes the level of our powers. Joy is the journey that leads a being from a lesser position to a greater perfection and eventually the level of power alters with it while sadness is the entire opposite of it. Desire is the quality of one’s imaginations and the level of intellect and human beings desire for things that will maximize their degree of power. While dealing with the desires, humans struggle to believe that their actions are morally appropriate meanwhile they wish to increase the bodily powers and think that they have all the will to control their actions. Spinoza believes that desire is an essential power of existence and it results in the moral virtue and spiritual blessedness (De Dijn, de Spinoza, & Spinoza, 1996).

Rene Descartes was a natural philosopher, metaphysician and a mathematician of the 16th century. In his work Passions of the Soul, he mentions that passion of desire is basically a distress for the soul that define the desires. He believes that soul works mysteriously as it projects what it believes is agreeable and can be prospected into the future. According to this theory, the essence of mind is thought. The purpose of mind is much more significant than mere existence and duration. It has two important powers and faculties that are intellect and will. The intellectual power is mainly the power of perception which can be categorized into different manners of wholesome intellect, vast imaginations and sensual perception. The pure intellectual powers work independent of the bodily functions and the capacity of brain. The power of sense and perception strongly depends on the operations performed by the body such as corporeal memory. However, the will constitutes of different modes that include the desire, denial, doubt, contention and abhorrence. The desires of a self being require the intellectual part of the mind whether it is pure, imaginary or sensory. These elements combined together define the desire and it can be controlled by mind. Descartes expresses that mind is an intellectual substance and has the capacity to control what it should demand for. Perhaps, he believes that fundamentally mind has its own will, however, the powers of intellect and perception substantially are more basic. He also concludes that will depends on these factors to perform its operations (Hatfield, 2018).

The famous British philosopher G.E. Moore has presented his idea on desire arguing that there are two theories of desire that should be defined and distinguished clearly. One theory is of John Stuart Mill that defines pleasure as the central object of all desire. The idea of pleasure develops a sense of desire in a living being. If an object is thought to be providing pleasure, the desire for its attainment is developed and increased after some time. When the pleasure is achieved, the desire is fulfilled. This suggests the pleasure is the motivating factor and sole object of desire. Moore presents another alternative theory according to which the desire for object contains an actual pleasure within it, and the desire is then for the indirect pleasures fulfilled from attaining it. The first theory suggests that a living being is not always conscious about the pleasure while desiring for an object. He may only be conscious about the object that we wish for, and is may be impelled to achieve it regardless of the thought whether it would bring him pain or pleasure. The second theory suggests that even if we expect some pleasure from attaining an object, it is rarely the pleasure that we wish or desire to be fulfilled (Hurka, 2005).

Sigmund Freud is the philosopher of 19th century and is considered as the creator of psychodynamic approach of psychology and explained the unconscious desires of human mind in order to explicitly explain the human behavior. He believes that mind has all the capacity and control over the conscious and unconscious decisions made on the basis of a human’s desires. He explained this concept by his three theories id, ego and super ego. The id theory explains the concept of desire and how human mind regulates its decisions. According to him id is the part of the unconscious brain that has desires and longs for pleasure. It contains the basic and primal instincts of mankind’s life. It is the most impulsive part of the mind that is dependent on the desire to seek pleasure and satisfaction (Lapsley & Stey, 2011). It does not have any control on the consequences or choice of the desires that may occur in the prospect of fulfilling the desire. When id takes control of the mins, people cannot distinguish between the right and wrong while making the decisions in order to satisfy their needs. Id is the part of mind that cuts off human beings from the real external world rather the dwells in its own world of perceptions and imaginations. Id only follows the inexorable pleasure and mind simply goes numb for taking any moral decisions. Freud believes that people are basically actors in the drama of their own minds and are pushed by desires and pulled by coincidence (Freud & Freud, 1992).

Immanuel Kant was the German philosopher who presented his idealistic and causative views in the age of enlightenment. Desires, in Kant’s opinion, is a representative of things that are not present and technically not at hand. He also calls it a preservation of objects that are already presents, along with the desires that do not appear at hand. This also includes those desires whose impact can impact the system in an adverse manner. Both the moral and the temporal values that are often associated with the empirical world, which gives rise to events and relations that have a place in these matters. Such desires often operate as forces that one has no control over, just as one cannot control any of the laws of nature, and these are often the laws that regulate desires in the first place. Desires, in Kant’s opinion makes us passive in a number of ways, subjecting us to heteronomy. As heteronomy is deeply dependent on the various external factors involved, people with desires are often plaything for the laws of nature and can have no sovereignty over them (Packer, 1989). Thus, one can term desires as the passive forces that most of us endure despite the circumstances we are in. The control us to the point of enslaving us. In Kant’s point of view, an inclination towards an object makes us submissive to it, whether one takes kindly to the idea or not. Even when the concept of morality is brought into question, the reason behind it must solely adhere to practical reasoning. However, Kant also warns people to disregard any form of inclination in favor of empirical causalities and completely disregards any and all forms of inclinations. Here, freedom is purely based on this reason alone and must, in no way, be restrained by a force of nature that one cannot control and even has the potential to bind us.

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