Your Name

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Essay # 2

The values which are hedonistic in nature subsist and permanently reside in pleasure. Hedonism implies that an individual ameliorates his actions and thought processes with the pursuit of extracting maximum happiness. According to the notable proponents of hedonism, for instance, James Bentham and David Hume, man is always seeking for a constant source of happiness, and all his actions are designed in such a way so that he can avoid pain. Hedonism stresses chiefly on the unorthodox and non-conformist aspect of the human nature. There is a recognition among the believers and followers of altruistic hedonism that helping someone, relaxing, or even meditating is a source of pleasure. Sensual indulgence is regarded as temporary and hedonists, quintessentially, stress on the selfless acts of pleasure as they are not destructive in nature. Therefore, it can be initially stated that hedonism is life-affirming in nature, in fact, it is a beautiful amalgam of beliefs in which most people indulge subconsciously. However, if this behavior exceeds a certain limit, it can transform into debauchery which can lead to self-destruction and temporary bodily pleasures. The attraction towards hedonism is fairly evident; when someone experiences something in a pleasant manner, this becomes a matter of utmost significance and many people also advocate that the achievement is the only thing which matters most, at that peculiar moment. There is a unique relationship between the ideas related with self-fulfillment and the well-being of an individual which enhances the explanatory importance of happiness by virtue of desirability.

Epicureanism is a philosophy propagated by Epicurean, who maintained that pleasure should be taken as a measure of life. According to Epicureanism, it is extremely hard to deny the apparent advantages and benefits of pleasure because according to Thomas Hobbes and Murphy’s Laws, everything is eventually inclined to go down the hill. On the other hand, the modern Stoic movement is interpreted as a radically active and life-affirming way of life. Stoicism is humane and constantly accepts the human emotions without altering their basic form. The cultivation of an excellent and sound mental state is the key to a happy life according to the stoic view of happiness. Epicureans argue that there is very little control practiced by humans on their surroundings and the only thing that an individual can control, is the way he or she passes judgment about things and the manners of thinking. However, both Stoicism and Epicureanism propound that human beings should pursue avoidance of excessive pleasures and that happiness should be found majorly in little things and everyday occurrences. Both the philosophies recommend self-control on practicing harm or breaking laws, but the underpinnings of these recommendations are different. Stoicism regards virtue above everything else and Epicureanism views this dimension much more practically and think of the future consequences before taking any steps. Therefore, it can be concluded that the views of happiness advocated by Stoicism and Epicureanism both are life-affirming in nature, owing to their emphasis on the importance of a virtuous social contract (Stankiewicz). Epicureanism also stipulates that the path to secure happiness involves withdrawal from the issues of public life, but this is again, criticized by a number of philosophers suggesting that neglect from the matters of public life may lead to a negation of embracing religion and / or taking responsibility of leadership roles. Stoicism and Epicureanism have more in common than the other two philosophies and their perspectives on happiness (Janaro and Altshuler). Another striking similarity between both perspectives is that both reflect happiness in negative terms. Stoics believe that the lack of mental disturbances lead to the attainment of happiness and Epicureans believe that if there is an absence of physical problems, an individual will automatically achieve happiness. The basic premise behind these notions is that the natural condition of mankind is happiness and any deviances from this natural order will cause suffering.

According to Buddhism, sometimes happiness is a very difficult thing to achieve. One of the reasons of this difficulty is that human beings are sometimes not aware of the real idea of happiness. The Buddhist view of happiness stipulates that happiness is merely a gratification of desires (Ricard). It further highlighted on the stance that the desire of wants and needs is deeply anchored in the illusion of an individual self. The gratification of a particular want ultimately leads to creation of other desires and the art of wanting gets better with the increase in attainment of various desires. The Buddhist perspective on happiness denotes that true happiness mirrors the mental state of an individual. This is because the state of an individual’s mind is not temporary and is not rooted in the pursuit of sensual gratifications. The mental state can be borne with ease and does not change with the passage of time, therefore, practicing righteousness in understanding, intention, livelihood, speech, and action, are necessary according to Buddhism so that true bliss can be achieved. The most life-affirming view of happiness can be regarded as the Buddhist perspective, as it preaches that opening up to the richness of everyday circumstances can bring true happiness. The pursuit of happiness, according to Buddhism, is by using knowledge and relentless practice, while simultaneously achieving equanimity. The direct path to happiness can also start by the correct understanding of real causes of suffering and its dynamics. Detachment from worldly cravings or other temporary needs and wants of life can also lead to a blissful state. Attaining a deeper version of happiness, always requires an unwavering look in the face of the actual realities of life.

# Works Cited

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